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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Women Speaking Up: A Feminist-Phenomenological Exploration

by

Carole Audrey Massing ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of Elementary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 1991

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Women Speaking Up: A Feminist-Phenomenological Exploration submitted by Carole Audrey Massing in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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To my students, in appreciation
for all that you teach me

Abstract

This exploration of women's speaking up begins with a concern for women's educational experiences and a commitment to learning from lived-experience. Women's experience of speaking up seems to provide a promising starting point for coming to understand educational needs for several reasons: the topic of speaking up appears to be personally significant to women; images of speech and silence have particular importance in feminist literature; and theory suggests that speaking up, as an act of language, is intertwined with knowing and being.

The phenomenology of speaking up shows it as an act pushed by emotion, usually anger. When we speak up, we expose ourselves to the judgements of others, and in turn, to our own assessment. Thus speaking up has the potential to show us who we are and what we can do, but it also entails risk. Even though women tend to describe their acts of speaking up in positive terms, they seem to experience some discomfort around subsequent interactions with the person to whom they have spoken. This may reflect the nature of the speaking up relationship. A political/cultural perspective suggests that speaking up may hold particular difficulties and risks for women because of their place in the culture.

Questioning the value of speaking up brings forward issues relating to power and to the political nature of feminism. Considering the risks and possibilities inherent in speaking up provides a basis for understanding how we might encourage women's meaningful speech in the classroom, and through it, their deeper involvement with their learning.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the people who have helped me to speak up, through the years of my life and in the course of my research.

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Nevin, who reminds me that we need to speak up in order to make the world a better place;

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CHAPTER ONE

Coming to the Research Question

> I never did do well in school. No matter how hard I worked I couldn't get good marks, so I finally thought, "Why bother?" I started hanging around with a rough crowd and partying a lot, and I was pregnant at seventeen. It's only now that I'm back at college that I'm starting to feel like maybe I'm not so dumb after all. But if I get a good comment from an instructor or an A on a course I still find myself thinking, "How can that be?" (Ruth)

The members of this small group of women are discussing their early education experiences. I join them just in time to hear Ruth's remark, and I stare in amazement. Ruth is one of those women whom I will describe in my records as an "excellent" student--mature, reflective and articulate. I know a little about her life from the journals that she writes: know that she works hard to be a good mother, that she has a comfortable relationship with her husband, that she is a preschool teacher and an active member of the community. In class, she is the one I can count on to make the thoughtful, pertinent comment that brings everyone, myself included, to think more broadly and deeply. Still, I should know by now that many of the women whom I teach--bright, compassionate and highly competent individuals--are still struggling with the messages that they received from a school system which somehow found them to be less capable and, in their eyes, less valuable than their classmates. Once my surprise has passed, I can only look sadly at Ruth and say, "Did that happen to you too?"

It is Ruth and students like her who make it imperative that I do all I can to find ways of teaching that will enhance female students' understanding of themselves and their confidence in themselves as learners. I got to know Ruth during a self-esteem course that I teach to evening students in an Early Childhood Development diploma program. One of the basic premises of the course, and the reason for its inclusion in the program, is an assumption that the self-esteem of caregivers will affect their interactions with children. From this point of view, an important part of increasing teachers' effectiveness in working with young children is helping them to see themselves as worthwhile, capable individuals. Often, it seems, this task involves helping them to build a more realistic picture of their abilities as students.

The students in this course, as in the other Early Childhood courses that I teach at the college and university level, are almost exclusively female, so I have no way of knowing how their needs may compare to those of male students. Certainly I know that males, too, may emerge from their school experiences indefensibly damaged. Still, there is considerable research evidence to suggest that females and males may have different educational experiences; that, in school settings, females tend to behave differently and act differently than males (Licht and Dweck, 1983: Clarricoates, 1987; Good, Sikes, and Brophy, 1973; Brophy and Good, 1974; Shakeshaft, 1986; Barrett, 1987; Eccles, 1987; Lees, 1987; Kelly, 1987; Walkerdine, 1987; Tittle, 1986). The differences might be of less concern if they did not chronicle a process by which girls move from a position of some advantage in the early years of school to one of disadvantage in later years (Sadker and Sadker, 1985). Even the possibility that the educational experience may be different for females than for males suggests a need to explore the female experience separately, particularly in a culture where male experience may tend to be the norm (Gilligan, 1982; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986). The value of such exploration may lie not only in creating a better understanding of female learning needs and experiences, but also in suggesting an alternative view of educational practice that might ultimately have something to offer to the education of both sexes.

A determination to learn about women's educational needs is one thing, finding a way to do it is quite another. Feminist literature has convinced me of the necessity to try to move outside of our accepted world view, and to base my exploration, instead, on women's lived experience. But what kind of experience could best provide an understanding of the meanings which women create, and therefore of our learning needs? It was an educational experience of my own which provided a clue. I had attended a staff development workshop, and reflecting on it later, I wrote:

> I had looked forward to this workshop, but what a disappointment it was! The talk was petty and self-congratulatory. Stereotypes of women and the poor were tossed about indiscriminately and, as a final insult, members of the audience pontificated on the "future of mankind" and "the path that man should take." A half hour into the session, I could think only of ways that I might make an inconspicuous exit, but then I started to become increasingly agitated. Finally I saw my opportunity, raised my hand, and made an impassioned statement about my feelings of exclusion in relation to the continued use of the he/male form. As I spoke, my hand was trembling, my voice began to shake, and I realized with astonishment that I was on the edge of tears. I felt that other members of the audience were embarrassed by me, even though the woman at my right muttered, without looking at me, "It's true." I sat down, and the speaker, obviously somewhat uncomfortable, responded with a question, "Did I do that? I try not to..." "No," I replied, but it's come up again and again in the discussion." No one pursued the issue, and after a few uncomfortable moments, the discussion moved on. I looked around the room. No one met my eyes, and I felt very alone. The session, mercifully, soon ended, and my first impulse was to seek out the particular men who had used the male forms and to reassure them that my comments weren't meant personally. My next thought was that they should be the ones to apologize to me, and on that note I walked out of the door. I wondered if anyone would speak to me--surely I was

> not the only person present who would believe this was an issue. When I was almost to my car, a young woman approached and thanked me for what I had done, and I tried to tell her how much I appreciated her support. At home that evening I talked about the incident with my family, but through the evening and into the next day I was depressed and disturbed. I wondered if there would be repercussions from my speech, what others might think or say about what I did. I replayed the scene in my mind, trying to get a better picture of what had happened, wondering at the depth of emotion that I felt, deciding whether I should have spoken differently. I didn't regret what I had done, for my cause was an important one, and is it not a good thing to stand up for one's beliefs? But if speaking up is a good thing, why did I feel so unsettled? What is it that makes speaking up like this so complicated and so difficult?

From a personal perspective, it was an experience that was intriguingly coincidental, for two reasons. The first was that it evoked memories of similar instances, and of my childhood, when my mother would spend sleepless nights reviewing the discussion at meetings she had just attended and reflecting on what she might have said differently. The feeling of familiarity was reinforced when I mentioned the incident to a class of women that I was teaching and they immediately responded with their own stories of speaking up, "I sat in the meeting for two hours while they talked back and forth and never did get to the point. Finally I said... . Now I wonder if I was too pushy?" As the women shared their stories that evening, they too were trying to understand. Why should speaking up involve such intense and conflicting feelings: frustration, fury, anxiety, satisfaction, relief? It seemed that any experience that was so compelling and so puzzling must be significant, and worthy of further examination.

I continued to explore speaking up in an informal way by casually mentioning my interest to friends and acquaintances. "I'm thinking of writing about Women

Speaking Up," I would say, and women would invariably respond with enthusiasm. Sometimes their reply would be an endorsement of the project: "That's great. Somebody should be writing about that." But most often it would be a personal anecdote: "Then I should tell you about the time...." The topic of speaking up seemed to strike a chord with women. For one thing, there appeared to be a general belief that speaking up was a good thing to do, and something which women needed to do more often and more easily: "I'm getting better at speaking up the more I do it," "I'm trying to speak up more." More telling, however, was the way that women told their stories of speaking up: recalling them with ease, as though they were pushing to be told, and recounting them with an emotion, an immediacy, that conveyed importance.

The topic of speaking up seemed to carry a great deal of personal significance for the women with whom I spoke and, as I searched elsewhere for references to speaking up, I found that it also plays an important role within the women's movement. "I speak out," writes Adrienne Rich, "and a great gust of freedom rushes in with my voice." Perhaps it is the emancipatory promise of speaking up which is appealing to women, for we are encouraged to "break the silence," to "find a voice," to "speak up," for our own sakes and to the benefit of others. Audre Lorde (1980) writes,

> The machine will try to grind you into dust anyway, whether or not we speak. We can sit in our corners mute forever while our sisters and our selves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned, we can sit in our safe corners mute as bottles, and we still will be no less afraid." (p. 22)

To speak what has hitherto been unspoken is seen as the first step in healing oneself. Victims of sexual abuse or family violence are counselled to find someone to tell, and to keep telling until someone listens (Bass and Davis, 1988;

Gilbert, Berrick, Prohn, and Nyman, 1989). There is release, it is felt, in the telling itself, for "there is no agony like bearing an untold story inside you" (Hurston, 1979, p. 71). Telling is an acknowledgement of injustice, a shifting of blame from oneself to another, and it may mean that we will find help in dealing with the experience. Speaking up about the experience of women, may, according to Freedman, be a way "to strip off masks," and end the pretences associated with maintaining an idealized physical appearance,

> Breaking silences means lifting the quarantine for the "sickies" who hide behind closed doors; the bulimics who vomit their lives away, the closet eaters and diet cheaters who cower under cover; the cosmetic junkies who live in terror of withdrawal, pretending youth and fearing truth. No more silence means naming the unmentionable, proclaiming the existence of stretch marks, age spots, varicose veins, flat chest, and all the rest. (p. 222)

Within the women's movement, speaking up is seen as a way of lessening isolation, of finding collective strength. In the 1960's and early 1970's, consciousness raising groups, where women shared their everyday experiences of being female, were

> One of the main ways to get involved in the women's liberation movement. ...It was in these groups that 'the personal is political' slogan took on real meaning. Through talking together in a situation of mutual trust, women learned that what they had believed was a personal problem was in fact shared or understood by many women.(Osman, 1983, p. 28)

Whether or not we would specifically identify our actions with the women's movement, those of us who are involved in Early Childhood Education find that speaking up is difficult to avoid. As women and as professionals caring for children, we find ourselves constantly in situations where we are advocating on behalf of children and families, as well as for recognition of the importance and difficulty of the "women's work" in which we are engaged.

Perhaps admonitions to speak up can only exist against a cultural backdrop in which women are encouraged to keep silent. Kramarae (1977) finds that women are typically viewed as talkative and that their talk is seen as "gossip and gibberish" about "trivial topics" (1977). Interestingly, this perception of women's loquacity exists in considerable contrast to research findings about female and male discourse. Investigators have found that, in mixed-sex settings, it is actually men who dominate the discourse, determining both the topics of conversation and the ways in which they are discussed. Women assume the "maintenance duties" necessary to keep the conversation going, such as searching for topics that will interest men and start them talking (Spender, 1980). While men tend to interrupt or ignore women when they speak (Zimmerman and West, 1975), women generally encourage and support the contributions of conversational partners through active listening: asking questions, using verbal and non-verbal prompts, and developing topics raised by the other person (Fishman, cited in Ayim, 1987). Feminist theorists (Spender, 1980; Cheda, 1984; Kramarae, 1985) suggest that the female reputation for excessive speech points to a context in which women are still expected to be silent: when this expectation exists, a woman who speaks at all will be considered as talkative. The topic of speaking up seems not only to be one that is personally important to women, but one which brings to light contradictory cultural messages to women about their speech.

From a theoretical perspective, speaking up can, as an act of language, be situated at the intersection of self and society and, from this position, it may show images of self and the process of developing self at the same time as it provides a cultural perspective on the experience of women. Heidegger (1962) has described language as "the house of

Being," referring to a relation in which understanding involves the apprehension of possibilities for one's being and is ontologically prior to each act of existence. Language serves to bring things into being which might otherwise remain concealed in the taken-for-grantedness of our day to day existence: thus the being of human beings is brought forth in their speech. Belenky et al.'s (1986) research with women explicates this link of self-in-the-world with language or, more specifically, with voice. The researchers use images of voice and silence to describe women's epistemological development, explaining that "women repeatedly used the metaphor of voice to depict their intellectual and ethical development; and that the development of a sense of voice, mind, and self were intricately intertwined" (p. 18). Thus questions of knowing become inseparable from questions of being, with language at the core.

As I talked with women about speaking up and looked for references to, and research about, women's speech, I became increasingly convinced that speaking up might, in some way, represent women's relation to self and society, such that an exploration of speaking up could provide a path beyond that particular experience into the meanings which women construct around being female. If the image of self includes self-as-teacher, women's experience, provides, in turn, a starting point for considering women's educational needs.

When we locate speaking up as an act of language within the intertwining of self and culture we provoke a number of questions: What are the relations between persons, and within the culture, that make speaking up possible? What is the experience of self in relation to speaking up? What possibilities are seen in speaking up? What is shown in the action of speaking up? There are innumerable questions, but they seem one step removed from the poignancy and the passion of women's stories and discussions of speaking up. These stories suggest that it is necessary to begin with a question that is broader and more basic, that is, "What is women's experience of speaking up?"

The chapters which follow document my attempts to learn about women's experience of speaking up. In Chapter Two, I outline various feminist theoretical perspectives, discuss methodological concerns in doing feminist research, and explain why I chose hermeneutic-phenomenology as a way of learning about women's experience. Chapter Three tells of the women and their stories, while Chapter Four shows how the themes of speaking up began to emerge as I listened and re-listened to the stories women told. Chapters Five, Six and Seven elaborate these themes as The Speaking Body, Showing One's Self Through Speech, and Speaking Up/Speaking With. In Chapter Eight, I consider whether or not speaking up is a good thing and, in the process, I discuss issues of power and touch upon some of the feminist research issues which I raise in Chapter Two. In the final chapter, I return to my concern with women's educational experience, focusing upon the risks of speaking up as a way of considering how we might create classrooms where women will speak.

CHAPTER TWO

A Focus on Women's Experience

It is only recently that women have come to play a part in the construction of knowledge or have begun to be recognized as possibly having experiences which are different from those of men and, therefore, worthy of investigation. Belenky et al. (1986) note that the cultural expectation that women should be "seen and not heard" is clearly evident in educational and research settings, where women have limited access, low status, and little recognition for their ideas. The situation is such, they believe, "that conceptions of knowledge and truth that are accepted and articulated today have been shaped throughout history by the male-dominated majority culture" (p. 5). While the work of women has had little recognition, neither has it been considered necessary to pay attention to female experience. Gilligan (1982) points out that much widely accepted developmental work, such as that of Kohlberg and Piaget, uses male experience as the norm but then generalizes to females. With Kohlberg's work, the result is that females appear as problematic or less capable. There is a need, therefore, to focus upon female experience in order to form a complete picture of human development. Gilligan suggests that looking at the world in another way, that is, through the lens of female experience, may result in a shift in the way that both female and male experience is viewed.

It seems, at first glance, that it should be a simple enough task to construct and conduct a piece of research that would help one to understand female experience. In fact, a decision to do feminist research is likely to represent the first step of a long and complicated process in which one is drawn further and further into exposing and questioning not only the assumptions implicit in the research process, but in a whole world view. If we consider, for example, the role which language plays in expressing culture, we see that to frame feminist research in a language which many consider to reflect a male-dominated culture is immediately problematic. A commitment to do feminist research becomes a decision to begin at the beginning: there are no theoretical constructs that can be adopted, unquestioningly, as a starting point. The appeal of a phenomenological approach to feminist research is that, in its intention to return to "the things themselves," it bypasses to some extent the biases of existing theory and methodology. Hermeneutics, which is directed to bringing forward what is hidden in texts, can be a useful adjunct to phenomenological explorations in that it is also directed to the understanding of lived-experience. Even though hermeneutic-phenomenology has advantages as an approach to feminist research, it also has disadvantages, among these the constraints imposed by the need, mentioned above, to work in a common language. This chapter outlines research issues and theoretical perspectives in feminist research, then explores the possibilities of hermeneutic-phenomenology for learning about women's experience.

Approaches to Feminist Research

Concern with women's silence is based in the observation that, in our culture and throughout history, women have occupied positions which are subordinate in terms of power, freedom, and autonomy. Attempts to understand the nature and cause of this oppression take various forms. Among the research studies that have been conducted are those which look at the differences in the ways that females and males are treated in various situations, and those which focus upon differences in the ways that males and females respond to a particular kind of treatment or situation. The existence of these two different approaches to research on female/male difference highlights a very basic concern in gender research, which is whether the cause of difference lies in nature or in nurture.

Nature versus Nurture

If females and males are treated differently in some aspect of their life experience, differences in performance or behavior may be linked to environmental influences. If the treatment which is received appears to be the same, but members of the two sexes react differently to it, a biological explanation is one possibility. Unfortunately, the multitude of factors involved in such determinations makes it impossible to isolate a single cause. While research is being conducted to identify basic biological differences between males and females, some theorists take the view that, since we will probably never have the answer to the nature versus nurture question, the task is to decide how we should act, given that lack of knowledge (Dubois, Kelly, Kennedy, Korsmeyer, and Robinson, 1985).

Interpreting the Research

Just as there are difficulties in arriving at causal explanations for female/male difference, there are also problems with the interpretation of research. For instance, is a female preference for cooperative learning environments a reflection of her inability to cope with competition, or is it simply a different way of being? When female behavior is measured against male standards, the behavior may be judged tentative or inadequate. Where female behavior is considered to be merely different, a separate female reality is implied. These two types of interpretation represent two different feminist perspectives. An acceptance of prevailing standards is implicit in a view which has been called liberal feminist, where concern is with achieving equality within the present system. Radical feminists, on the other hand, feel that there is a female reality which is different from that of males, and see a need to redefine societal structures to accommodate the female experience. A third perspective, that of the socialist feminist, elaborates and expands socialist theory to create a more comprehensive view of women's situation.

Issues in Feminist Research

There are broad and interrelated factors which come to bear on the conduct and interpretation of feminist research. One is that feminists tend to operate from particular positions with regard to the relation of feminist action to the dominant society, and these are reflected in the approach to research. Research will be formulated and interpreted differently depending on whether it derives from a liberal, radical or socialist feminist approach. Feminists are also forced to assume a stance with regard to the politics of the work. For example, some theorists suggest that feminist theory cannot be apolitical, that theory is, in fact, "any account which tries to draw political conclusions, and which proposes a strategy or tactics for the feminist movement" (Delphy and Plaza, 1980, p. 4). From this viewpoint, any work which suggests that women are essentially different from men becomes problematic, because it may provide justification for differential treatment. Another concern is that we, as individuals, have formed our identities and live our lives within a particular world view, one which feminists identify as patriarchy, and this tends to shape and influence our research and interpretations in ways that we often do not even recognize. To explore feminist theory and debate is to constantly uncover threads of these concerns about perspective and purpose.

Feminist Theory and Debate

Attempts to explain female oppression reflect a number of different approaches and perspectives. O'Brien (1981) reconceptualizes Marxist theory in her book, The Politics of Reproduction, explaining the growth of the public and private realms as a response to the male need to control the reproductive process. Eisler (1987) traces the shift, throughout history, from a partnership to a dominator model of society. Theories of sexual asymmetry, what has been termed the "dominant but muted" model, psychoanalytic theories, and gender role theory all reflect radical feminist attempts to explain why female reality is different from that of males.

Theories of Sexual Asymmetry

Theories of sexual asymmetry hold that women's responsibility for bearing and raising children leads to the differentiation of male and female spheres of activity. In The Reproduction of Mothering, Chodorow (1978) suggests that in a society where women are the primary caregivers in early childhood, male/female differences result from the fact that girls bond with the same-sex parent whereas boys bond with the different sex parent. The developmental task for males, therefore, becomes breaking away and achieving autonomy, whereas girls are able to maintain their connectedness and attachment with their same sex parent. In the process, males develop a more separate, rigidly defined ego structure, while females maintain more flexible ego boundaries which facilitate definition of self in relation to others. Gilligan's (1982) work draws upon Chodorow in positing paths of development which may be quite different for females and for males.

The "Dominant but Muted" Model

The "dominant but muted" model was originated by anthropologists Shirley and Edwin Ardener (1978), and has helped to form the basis for work by radical feminists such as Spender (1980, 1981, 1987) and Kramarae (1979, 1980, 1981, 1984, 1985). The theory proposes that, while every group in society generates meaning with regard to the nature of reality, only the meanings of the dominant group find full expression because it is that group which controls the channels of communication. The muted groups are not silent, and may in fact speak a great deal, but they are not able to say all that they wish to say, when and where they wish to say it. The implication is that muted groups must translate their speech into the dominant mode if they wish to be heard.

Kramarae (1981) builds on the Ardener's notions with her hypothesis that women have difficulty with public speaking because they have to translate into the male mode of speaking but, at the same time, that their need to be "bilingual" means that women are more able to understand what men are saying than men are to understand women's messages. She believes that the dominant modes of expression are not satisfactory to women, and that women are searching for alternatives. Spender (1980) states that males are able to impose their own view of the world because they control language and, therefore, meaning. Women have been excluded in a systematic way from the making of meaning, as evidenced, for example, by their lack of representation in academic circles. Women's response to this exclusion is either alienation, with the internalization of male reality, or silence, resulting from the rejection of that reality.

Language-Based Psychoanalytic Theories

As Cameron (1985) points out, psychoanalysis as a practice has been oppressive to women, but psychoanalysis as a theory is attractive as a way of explaining the internalization of subordination and the role that sexuality plays in identity formation. Kristeva (1986) and Irigaray (1985) are theorists within the psychoanalytic tradition, the former developing, and the latter challenging, the work of Lacan (Rice and Kennedy, 1986).

Lacan draws upon Saussure and Freud in producing a description of child development which highlights the role of language learning as an individuating and socializing process. Following from Freud's conception of the castration complex as representing the stage of male/female differentiation, Lacan posits that it is with the introduction of the phallus that the child moves from an Imaginary to a Symbolic order. The phallus becomes a symbol of lack, loss and desire, associated with the loss of the mother's body, and of a patriarchal social order, in the prohibition of incest and the threat of castration. It dominates the symbolic order, because Lacan believes that children are brought to language only with their awareness of loss, of something absent or missing.

Julie Kristeva develops Lacan's work in a way that rejects the biological determination of masculinity or femininity. Instead, she posits that the position individuals take with regard to the symbolic order is a matter of identification with one parent or the other. The male position, fully integrated into the symbolic order and the female position, marginal to it, are both open to persons of either sex. Kristeva equates the different feminist political positions with different relations to the symbolic: liberal feminism as calling for a move from a marginal to an equal place; radical feminism as rejecting the value of the symbolic; and a further, third, stage as renouncing the opposition of male and female and the whole idea of sexual identity.

Luce Irigaray is critical of Lacan's work for its positioning of women as opposite or lacking, rather than as different. Where Lacan believes that women exist in a negative relation to language, Irigaray believes that women have a language of their own, and that patriarchy involves the suppression of this language.

Gender Role Theory

Gender role theory maintains that the experiences which individuals have in society are informed by the gender-associated expectations of that society. The same action might receive a different response when performed by a male than by a female, because certain behaviors are considered appropriate for each gender. The way in which individuals interpret their actions and the responses they receive to them is also influenced by the gender-role expectations which they hold for themselves. A particular experience is framed, therefore, within a gender context. Because language transmits and expresses the norms of a society, it plays a central role in conveying and maintaining society's values concerning gender-appropriate behavior.

As defined by Eisenstein (1987), gender refers to "the culturally and socially shaped cluster of expectations, attributes and behaviors assigned to that category of human being by the society into which the child was born." (p. 37) Gender-related perceptions, then, are culture-specific, constructed through social interactions, and transmitted largely, like other societal norms, through language. They help to define social roles and the activities that are central to these roles. Gender roles appear to be learned at a very early age. Research by Huston (1983), finds that, by age five, children have definite, sex-stereotypical ideas about activities and characteristics, and that their goals and behaviors tend to be conducted in accordance with these. Gender-role socialization may influence not only the activities but also the values that are adopted by males and by females. Eccles (1987) sees this as a possible explanation for male interest in achievement and "things" as opposed to female interest in people. The influence of gender roles is such that the view we hold of "success" may tend to be defined according to gender considerations. For example, women may define their success more in relation to their parenting role, while men may more often define it in terms of their occupational goals. To the extent that they identify with their gender roles, people may make choices that allow them to successfully meet the expectations associated with them. Eccles (1987) feels that the kinds of occupational choices that women make tend to reflect their concern for anticipated family roles. She notes research concerning the career aspirations of high school students which shows that males are more likely to consider the status and economic aspects of an occupation while females more often consider the human service aspects and their own intrinsic interest. (p. 150)

Gender role perceptions are seen as shaping the image that individuals construct of themselves, encouraging females to see themselves as less competent in particular areas. Eccles (1987) points out, too, that behaviors that are inconsistent with the gender roles of a culture can be threatening, so that a woman who achieves success in a non-traditional role may be devalued by others. Gender roles exist as a part of a culture and, like culture, are both created by, and help to create, the individuals within the culture. The expectations associated with gender role will play a large part in the meanings that individuals assign to their experiences, and therefore in the conception of self which they hold.

The power of gender role expectations is seen as deriving from their roots in the ideology and institutions of society. These roots allow them to reflect and transmit the beliefs and organization of the culture at the most basic levels of human development.

Theory and Politics in Feminism

The theoretical diversity that is expected and accepted within the academic tradition can become problematic when it is superimposed upon a political objective, that is, when there is the underlying goal of ending female oppression. As I have mentioned earlier, theories which hint at biological determination may be seen as politically dangerous, lending justification to the differential treatment of women based on a theory of "natural difference." Thus, in the first issue of the French publication Feminist Issues, (1980) Monique Plaza introduces her critique of Iragaray's formulations with the statement that, "to constitute a field of studies with this belief in the ineluctability of the natural difference between the sexes can only reduplicate patriarchal logic and not subvert it," (p. 74) and the editors define their radical feminist stance as follows:

> Radical feminism takes as its first principle staying on the ground which the first feminists secured against the naturalist ideology. This demands:
> 1. The resolute refusal of any construction or projection of an idea of "Woman" as existing outside of society.
> 2. The corollary of this is to try to take apart the notion of the "difference between the sexes" which orders and supports this idea of "Woman," this being an integral part of natural ideology. The social existence of men and women does not depend at all on their nature as male and female i.e. on the shape of their anatomical sexual organs. (p. 5)

The editors of this publication formulate oppression in terms of power, where the difference is the outcome of the power differential and the goal is the elimination of difference.

In her comparison of philosophical and feminist methodology, Sherwin (1988) states quite clearly that feminists have political as well as intellectual aims:

> What this means in practice is that a theoretical claim in feminism must be consistent with overall feminist values, and, in fact, should further the pursuit of those values. The effect, as well as the logic, of a theory is significant. A theory that does not contribute to political change is of only limited interest. In other words, feminists view political effects as one measure of acceptability, though certainly not the only measure. Philosophers tend to be appalled by such frank admissions of bias. (p. 21)

One of the debates that arises within the feminist movement, also related to the balance of the political and the theoretical, has to do with the treatment of social and cultural diversity. While some feminists, like the editors of Feminist Issues, maintain that it is politically important to insist that all women belong to the same social class, others protest that feminism reflects the values and experience of a minority of women--who are relatively privileged--and has little to say to those who fall outside of that group. For example, Fisher-Manuck comments that consciousness-raising groups where women share their experiences of being female are

> ..a valuable cornerstone of feminist theory and practice. But as a verbal exercise in self-examination and group sharing, it is also an approach with a class and race bias. White middle-class women are comfortable with a form that relies mainly on verbal skills. Women of other races and classes are not as comfortable in situations that stress group process...the formality of using CR as a technique for communication is stifling and intimidating to women who are accustomed to expressing themselves in less defined and more directed forms. (In Kramarae et al., 1985, p. 105)

Language, Culture, and the Individual

The questions of speaking up exist at the intersection of language, culture, and the individual. Various theoretical approaches reflect different perspectives on the relationships among these elements, for example, as Cameron (1985) explains, theorists such as Spender, Irigaray and Kristeva work from a perspective of linguistic determinism, believing that language determines perception and therefore reality, and that therefore language can act as a means of control. Spender and the Ardeners believe that, because women have different experiences from men, they generate different meanings. Since men control the processes by which meanings are encoded in language, female meanings are excluded. Intertwined with the issue of control is one of power. Cameron points out that

> It is important to grasp the difference between saying, on the one hand, that women lack the means to express their world view in language and are thus muted in society, and saying on the other hand that women are muted because the kind of language they use is unacceptable to men. To make the first assertion is to claim that women have a linguistic problem; to make the second assertion is to say that the problem is not one of language but one of power. (p. 105)

The matter of linguistic determinism involves our relationship to language, and the question that arises has to do with the extent to which language shapes us and we shape language. The idea of meaning is also at stake, that is, whether it is possible for meaning to express experience or whether meaning is made possible by language.

Cameron ultimately rejects the premises of the radical feminist theories she explores, concluding that linguistic determinism is a myth, that male control over meaning is impossible, and that female alienation from language does not exist in the form presented in the theories. The alternative which she proposes is based in women's experience. Language is studied as a process and not separated from time, space, or other forms of social behavior, and meaning is indeterminate, complex, and dynamic:

> By paying attention to the whole context in which speech occurs, the analyst would be spared the necessity of postulating invariant correspondences of form and meaning: she could allow what we all know, that words are used and understood differently by different speakers at different times and in different situations, and she could refer to the specifics of context in order to explain that variation. (p. 140)

Cameron's analysis suggests the need for a feminist exploration which focuses upon direct experience, but which also takes into account the possibility of institutional control through gender roles and other regulatory mechanisms.

As we have seen, women's experience has been described and interpreted from a number of positions, and there are seemingly irresolvable differences among the various perspectives. Where we are looking at the possibility of a different world view, however, the overlay of theoretical perspectives seems premature. To derive knowledge from direct experience, but with consideration for cultural factors, may bypass this difficulty.

Deriving Knowledge from Direct Experience

Much of Western philosophy assumes that concrete experience exists separately from the concepts which are used to describe and explain it. The unity of concrete experience and concepts was posited first by Kant, and later by others such as Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. Human science research, which includes hermeneutics and phenomenology, is based upon this derivation of knowledge from concrete experience or, in Husserl's words, "from the things themselves." The implication of such an approach for feminist research is that women's experiences can be described more directly than would otherwise be possible, and less through the lens of male experience. It should be noted, however, that the prescriptions of language and culture are impossible to circumvent, and will always be present to some extent in descriptions of female experience. To borrow a phrase Morstein (1988), the voice that is heard can only be une voix presque mienne. While descriptions of lived-experience are always embedded in the cultural context, it would seem important that their possible impact be highlighted in a way that brings into question essentialist interpretations of that experience. A description of women's lived experience may, indeed, represent a way of being that is different from that of males, but it may also be a way that is embedded in our culture, at a level that is beyond our immediate awareness.

Human Science versus the Empirical-Analytic Mode

Because human science research derives from a world view that is very different from that of the more widely recognized empirical-analytic mode, the two approaches seem almost to exist in opposition to one another. Whereas in the empirical-analytic tradition, reality is construed as existing independently of the researcher so that it can be objectively observed and measured, human science research is built upon a view of reality as constructed from the constituting activities of our minds. The implications of this difference are seen throughout the research process. The researcher, who is an objective observer in the former approach becomes, in human science research, an integral part of the process which is being investigated. In human science research, truth is a matter of agreement within a particular context, rather than an issue of correspondence to reality. Where the goal of empirical-analytic research is explanation, through the discovery, modification and extension of laws, the intent of human science research is interpretive understanding. In the empirical-analytic tradition, particulars are of interest insofar as they represent the general, while human science research is based on a belief that the general resides in the particular, so that the goal is to achieve a thorough and full knowledge of the particular. The language and forms of expression associated with the two approaches differ as well. The findings of empirical-analytic research are represented in formal statements, using literal language and following a standard format. The language that is used in the actual research is imposed by the researcher and will derive from the research tradition and the conceptual framework of the investigator. In human science research, the language is that which is used in the constituting process, and form conveys essence in the final product. The process of empirical-analytic research is pre-specified and standardized. Methods of data collection and analysis are outlined before the project begins, according to accepted criteria. The course of human science research is determined by the interpretive process, so that data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously and there is a constant movement from part to whole and back to part. The value of a piece of empirical-analytic research is judged by its adherence to accepted methodology. The methods used must not bias the conclusions and the conclusions must be supported by evidence. The quality of human science research is determined less by the process which is followed and more by the extent to which the finished product illuminates and informs the question. Based as they are on two opposing views of reality, human science and empirical analytic research take quite different forms. Although each approach has its place, the concern in this study is to find the one that is most suitable for doing feminist research.

While useful feminist research might be conducted within the empirical-analytic mode, the premises and practice of that approach create a number of points of difficulty, particularly from a radical feminist perspective. In a field of investigation which questions all of the assumptions of the dominant world view, a system of inquiry which has its foundations in that accepted view becomes problematic. Human science approaches avoid some of these problems, although they still do not offer a perfect solution because of their reliance on language, which again tends to situate the investigation within the dominant cultural perspective. Nevertheless, there are a number of reasons why the empirical-analytic view seems to be the one more closely associated with what radical feminists call the patriarchy.

The Matter of Power

Power issues manifest themselves in the research enterprise in a number of ways. There is the power that is ascribed to the empirical-analytic methodology, the power that derives from language, and the power that determines who constructs knowledge. We have learned to respect the aura of objectivity and distance which accompanies what Firestone (1987) calls the "rhetoric of research." The authority which seems to exist in the empirical-analytic methods obscures the extent to which the design, conduct and presentation of the research can shape its outcomes and our reactions to it. However, as Eichler (1987) points out, sexist bias can be present in the formulation of research questions, in the ways that questions are asked, in the interpretation of findings, and in the manner in which results are used. The fact that method is predetermined and imposed upon that which is being investigated leaves the research with a great deal of power to define the research situations, and that power, rather than being acknowledged, is concealed beneath a cloak of objectivity. Husserl describes this situation as one where method becomes predominant over the phenomenon which is being studied, so that support for ideas is drawn from the life world:

> This universe of determinations in themselves, in which exact science comprehends the universe of existing things, is nothing else than a fabric of ideas cast over the life world, so that every scientific result has its foundation of sense in, and is referred back to, this immediate experience and world of experience. The fabric of ideas leads us to take for true being what is method.
> (In Kersten, 1971, p. 42)

Heidegger refers to the kind of thinking where we set things forth in a way that suits us as _Vor-stellen_, and is critical of the _vor_, in which things are put forward according to our own construction, and the _stellen_, the wilfulness with which we make such assumptions. He discusses the _Gegnet_ as a place where things rest 'in themselves,' free from frameworks which we have devised. Where, as in feminist research, what is required may be nothing less than a reconceptualized world view, an approach which adheres closely to prevailing thought and practice can be limiting if not dangerous. To return as nearly as possible to "the things themselves" seems a desirable objective.

"Language is always on the side of power," Barthes (1989, p. 311) comments, and certainly this association of language and power presents difficulties for feminist research. The way in which language is used contributes in part to the perception of rigor associated with empirical-analytic research. At the same time, the unreflective use of common language forms can distort the research process and findings. For example, Silveira (1980) reports that the use of generic male terms tends to elicit responses based on a male identity when a male/female one is intended. Sexually-biased assumptions become implicit in terms such as maternal deprivation, which implies that only mothers are involved in parenting. On the other hand, the use of gender-inclusive terms for a sex-specific situation may lead to confusion, as when delinquent boys are called delinquent adolescents; when mothers are referred to more generically, as parents; or when "wife-battering" becomes "spouse-battering" (Eichler, 1987).

The power of methodology and of language derives from a larger society, and that society may also decide who participates in research activities. Radical feminist researchers see a need to focus upon female experience because they maintain that, to this point, women have been systematically excluded from the production of knowledge. They point to women's limited opportunities to do research, and the lack of credence afforded to research done by females. Feminists point out, for instance, that the definition of women as intuitive, emotional and oriented to the personal undermines their credibility as constructors of knowledge in a society which associates truth with objectivity and rationality (Belenky et al., 1986; Karmarae, 1980). One result of women's exclusion from research activity is that male experience and male viewpoints have been presented as a norm.

The Matter of Assumptions

Deciding on an approach to feminist research seems like a process of uncovering layers of assumptions. Beliefs and practice that have been taken for granted must be exposed to questioning and evaluation. Research designs and theoretical frameworks need to be examined with care in order to bypass the pre-judgements which we have internalized as a part of our cultural and academic tradition. Dubois et al. (1985) point out that

> Although sexist ideology sometimes emerges in the form of an explicit argument, more frequently it lurks within unexamined conceptual frameworks that are not necessarily even deliberately chosen by those who employ them. (p. 105)

To begin to question such assumptions at the most basic level is to some extent synonymous with the adoption of a radical feminist stance, as both liberal and socialist feminism tend to be confined within existing ideologies. In admitting the possibility of a separate, different female reality, one gains the freedom to explore that possible reality apart from the constraints of existing tradition. What seems important, however, is that, in adopting a radical feminist position, we avoid the assumptions of an essentialist view which undermines the possible influence of cultural experience and which divides females and males distinctly into two categories without allowing for overlap between the two.

From a research perspective, the way in which the preconceptions of the researcher are treated is an important consideration, because presuppositions have the potential to shape the research in ways that may not be acknowledged or even intended. Because the empirical-analytic mode is premised in objectivity, researcher assumptions are identified at the beginning of the research and then set aside, with the intention that consumers of the research will take these into account. The identification represents the researcher's awareness at that time, and it is presumed that there will be little change through the course of the research process. Human science research tends to not only delineate, but also work from, the researcher's presuppositions. Gadamer (1975) points out that presuppositions and pre-understandings are always present because of our situatedness in history, and that they are necessary to our understanding. We must therefore recognize them and take care that they do not stand in the way of the truth which presents itself. In the attitude of questioning and openness that is required for human science research, understanding of self grows simultaneously with the understanding of that which is being explored. Both the empirical-analytic and the human science approaches require, therefore, that preconceptions be identified. There is an assumption, in the former research position that, once identified, these presuppositions no longer need to be dealt with, or are the concern, at least, of those who are using and evaluating the research. The human science approach maintains that pre-judgements are an integral part of the interpretive process, that they will be challenged in the course of the research, and that they are likely to be changed by it.

The treatment of presuppositions and preconceptions is important to feminist research because we are all, males and females, embedded in our society. We have internalized and, at least to some degree, accepted its expectations and explanations. The empirical-analytic research tradition derives from this world view and, because of the assumptions that it makes, has a tendency to perpetuate a perception of reality that is consistent with it. For this reason, finding alternate research paradigms is a part of the feminist agenda for examining and redefining the structures of society. Human science approaches such as hermeneutic-phenomenology seem to be compatible, in many ways, with the needs of feminist research.

A Feminist-Phenomenological Approach to Women Speaking Up

I have argued that a human science approach to research can penetrate the blanket of assumptions which shrouds empirical-analytic research, allowing ways of being which have been hidden or distorted to show themselves. In this section I will situate phenomenology or, more specifically, hermeneutic-phenomenology, as a research approach, discuss its relationship to feminism, then go on to detail my use of a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach in exploring women's experience of speaking up.

The Nature of Hermeneutic-Phenomenology

The empirical-analytic approach to research derives from natural science, and its history reaches back as far as Aristotle. Its application to studies of human behavior came later in history, and it is now the accepted method of investigation in disciplines such as behavioral psychology. Human science methods have evolved more recently, but have a firm philosophical foundation in the works of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, Ricouer, and others. Hermeneutic-phenomenology is a form of human science research which is based in phenomenology but extended by hermeneutics and, to a certain extent, semiotics. (Van Manen, 1989) As described by Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology "is the study of essences....It tries to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide" (1962, p. vii).

Heidegger describes the purpose of phenomenology as letting "that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself" (Lawson, p. 70). Hermeneutics, which evolved originally from work with biblical texts, has to do with interpretation. It is an act of mediation between interpreter and text, for the purpose of bringing to awareness that which is hidden or unsaid in the text.. Hermeneutic-phenomenology, therefore, is directed to the recovery of lived-experience, that is, of the world as we immediately experience it at a pre-reflective and pre-theoretic level, through the act of interpretation.

Hermeneutic-Phenomenology and Feminism

> Feminists see phenomenology as naively apolitical and its exclusion of psychoanalytic theory as a refusal to acknowledge desire in the constitution of knowledge, communication, and gender. Phenomenologists see feminists as ideological, imposing a political or psychoanalytic determinism on their accounts of 'the things themselves.' We have much to learn from each other. Phenomenology can correct a feminist's temptation to lie to herself about feeling and affiliation in order to deny the constraints of attachment. The feminist can correct the phenomenologist's refusal to remove the seals of repression that psychoanalytic theory has revealed. (Grumet, 1988, p. 65)

As Grumet's comments suggest, a marriage between phenomenology and feminism may be an uneasy, but ultimately productive, one. There are two factors which I feel are worthy of note in this regard, and these have to do with the political agenda of feminism and the role of language in feminist research.

Phenomenology may have the potential to subvert the political agendas which may intrude upon feminist research, because the process involves bringing these kinds of assumptions or pre-judgements to awareness. On the other hand, I would see phenomenology as tending to ignore the issues of power and control which theorists such as Cameron (1985) see as playing an important role in female experience. For this reason, and to offset the tendency toward essentialist interpretation which might otherwise exist, I have chosen to highlight cultural factors as distinct from, but related to, the phenomenology of women speaking up.

The problem of language is one which is a part of all research endeavors but which seems to be particularly important in feminist research. Language is culturally based and we are within language:

> Human beings remain committed to and within the being of language, and can never step out of it and look at it from somewhere else. Thus we always see the nature of language only to the extent that language itself has us in view, has appropriated us to itself. (Lawson, on Heidegger, p. 25)

As we have seen, radical feminists such as Spender (1980), believe that the language in which we operate is constructed by males and that women are in a position of having to "translate" in order to function in the male-dominated society. Views such as this open the possibility that women use experience language differently from men, and underline the difficulty that feminist researchers face in having to work, and express their findings in, the language of the dominant culture.

Coming at the question of language from two perspectives, the feminist and the hermeneutic-phenomenological, we can see points of convergence. From a feminist viewpoint, efforts have been made to "reclaim" the language of women (Daly, 1978; Kramarae, 1985). Kramarae et al. (1985) describe the difficulties of compiling a feminist dictionary and the approaches which they use in order to uncover women's words and meanings:

> Thus one must conclude that these words and definitions (1) have been lost or suppressed, (2) have been expressed in subtexts or other subversions of conventional expression, (3) have been expressed orally but not written down, and

> (4) have been expressed in non-linguistic forms. Possible avenues of research thus include (1) the examination of 'lost' works, unpublished writings by women, and the records of women's communities and activities, (2) the 'close reading' of women's written work to discover its subversive meanings, (3) the use of oral histories to capture the language of women who do not read or write or are not likely to write themselves, and (4) the codes and symbols produced by women in non-print form. (p. 214)

This concern with going beyond conventional usage to find a meaning that is closer to women's experience is essentially a hermeneutic enterprise. "The actual interpretation," says Heidegger, "must show what does not stand in the words and is nevertheless said" (Lawson, p. 65). Similarly, it may be seen as reflecting the phenomenological intent to uncover what is hidden. The feminist and the hermeneutic-phenomenological appear to meet around this enterprise, yet it is important to recognize that each is essentially confined to working from a starting point which is the language as we know it. It seems that we cannot avoid the constraints of the common language, but can only attempt to reflect the lifeworld inasmuch as that is possible, using the everyday modes of speech and taking context into account. In this research, I have attempted wherever possible to describe the experience of speaking up through the stories which the women told. One of my concerns was with the heavy reliance on written accounts, because of the formalization that tends to occur when speech becomes writing and because some of the people who contributed stories were not very comfortable with the writing process. The speech which seemed closest to the lifeworld was that which occurred in informal conversations, and I have tried to capture this where I could.

The Research Process

I have used a phenomenological-hermeneutic approach in this exploration of women speaking up, although I have chosen to present the phenomenological themes against a cultural-feminist backdrop. As I have mentioned above, my purpose in highlighting the cultural dimension is to provide a balance to the essentialist interpretation which may easily follow descriptions of female experience, and also to emphasize the significance of the phenomenological themes in relation to aspects of the culture. I realize that, in including the cultural perspective, I am treading the ground of a particular theoretical framework in just the manner which I have said needs to be avoided. I have tried to handle this by presenting the cultural perspectives as possibilities, by basing them as much as possible in women's life-experience, and by setting them clearly apart from the phenomenological work. The final work, then, includes these two dimensions, the phenomenological and the cultural backdrop. The actual research, however, is conducted within a phenomenological-hermeneutic approach.

Phenomenological-hermeneutic research is built around a question about meaning, and depends upon a position of openness, of listening. The explication of assumptions is ongoing, as the taken-for-granted is made apparent and presented for questioning. Phenomenological inquiry is oriented to the lifeworld, so that personal experience may form a starting point in data collection. The process of "analysis" is based in writing, in that the researcher comes to understand through efforts to represent understandings in written form. In the end, the value of the research lies in the way that it articulates experience, that is, in the extent to which what is written evokes nods of recognition, "Yes, that's the way it is for me, too." Hermeneutic-phenomenological research is based on an approach, rather than a method, and it follows more of a spiral than a linear direction. Nevertheless, there are certain guideposts: orienting to the phenomena, delineating assumptions and boundaries, gathering the data, looking for themes, and writing and rewriting act as organizers for the process.

Orienting to the Phenomena

A phenomenological investigation inquires about meaning, asking, "What is this experience like?" or "What does it mean?" Thus this inquiry asks, "What is women's experience of speaking up?", with the hope of coming to a better understanding of the nature of that experience. This question has served to orient the investigation throughout the research process, serving as a reference point for data collection and interpretation.

Determining Assumptions

The matter of explicating assumptions is integrally related to the position of openness required for phenomenological research. In this context, it is useful to note Fischer's (1985) conclusions regarding self-deception:

> The possibility of deceiving oneself arises when three interrelated conditions are present: (1) when one is already committed to a particular understanding of some phenomena of one's world; (2) when certain emerging significations of the phenomena render that understanding ambiguously uncertain, and (3) when one anxiously lives this ambiguous uncertainty as threatening not only one's commitment to that particular understanding, but also, albeit horizontally, one's commitments to related understandings of other phenomena. (p. 151)

The commitment that is necessary for doing phenomenological research, therefore, must involve a desire for understanding so urgent and persistent that one is prepared to put aside the safety of assumptions and enter the insecure and threatening realm of uncertainty. My personal experience has been that this commitment to questioning assumptions forces an attitude of openness as a way of being-in-the-world. I have sometimes wondered, however, what my students must think about a teacher who doesn't seem to know anything at all for sure!

There are certain assumptions implicit in the design of this research, nonetheless. The first is that it is important to focus upon women's experience, because women appear, until recently, to have been overlooked, or excluded from, the construction of knowledge. Another is that we create our image of self in interaction with our culture. The third is that language is an inextricable part of the relation between self and culture and, as such, it can reveal something of how we experience the world. Finally, there is the assumption to which I alluded in the first chapter, that the experience of self includes self-as-learner and self-as-teacher, so that anything that happens to promote understanding and acceptance of self helps an individual to become a better teacher.

Delineating Boundaries

It is important to recognize that, because this research is framed as a hermeneutic-phenomenological exploration, the product which results will not meet the standards of replicability or generalizability required in empirical-analytic research.

Gathering Data

The nature of phenomenological inquiry is that of an all-consuming quest, and its field of activity is the lifeworld. As Van Manen (1989) points out, "we need to search everywhere in the lifeworld for lived-experience material that, upon reflective examination, might yield something of its fundamental nature" (1989, p. 49).

My data collection has been ongoing over the past three years. During this time, I have collected almost two hundred written accounts of "A Time I Spoke Up," along with writing on related topics such as "A Time When I Felt Listened To" and "A Time When I Wished I Had Spoken Up." In-depth tape-recorded conversations with five women allowed me to better understand aspects of speaking up which were suggested in the written accounts. I saved relevant written material from student journals in the Understanding Self-Esteem class which I teach at the college level, as well as complete copies of twenty student journals from a six-week summer course for fourth and fifth year university students in early childhood education. Other sources of information have included informal discussions and anecdotes, my personal and research journals, articles in newspapers, periodicals and books, novels, television, film, music and art. Any problems which I encountered in the course of data collection seemed to involve, not so much finding material, but sifting through it and staying focused upon the topic of speaking up.

One very sensitive area in my data collection process had to do with the involvement of my students. I was always aware that, as the teacher, and however open our relationship might seem to me to be, I occupied a position of power which I could easily abuse. I tried, by setting up a process where contributions would be optional and anonymous, to ensure that students did not feel in any way obligated or coerced to contribute written materials . However, there were situations where I directly asked students if I might copy part or all of a journal or assignment, explained fully the use that I intended, and asked them to decide whether or not they would give written consent for me to do so. There were very occasional refusals, but I hope there were no reluctant consents. My impression was that students tended to be interested in the topic and that many enjoyed having the opportunity to tell about a time of speaking up. As my work progressed, I was able to discuss with students, particularly in the context of the Understanding Self-Esteem class, some of the impressions I was developing and to ask, "How does this fit with your experience of speaking up?" The feedback I received was invaluable, and the students seemed to be quite involved with the discussions. I hope that the benefit from these kinds of activities was to them as well as to me.

Beginning with personal experience.

Van Manen (1989) notes that our most accessible source of lived-experience data is in our own lives. In fact, all other material is already a transformation of the original experience. Constructions of personal experience help to orient the researcher to the phenomena, thus serving as a guide to the investigative process. There is a recognition in these personal descriptions that experiences of individuals are also possible experiences of others, just as the experiences of others are possible experiences for us. My investigation began, in one sense, with my puzzling experience of speaking up at a staff development workshop, which then evoked other memories as well as similar stories from other women. I have drawn upon my personal experience throughout the exploration, as a suggestion of "what might be" in the experience of other women.

Hermeneutic interviews.

A conversation occurs between persons who are concerned with making sense of their common world. The relation that exists is three-way, where the conversational partners relate to each other and also to the notion with which they are concerned. To maintain this relation within a research context can be difficult, for the researcher enters the conversation deeply oriented to the phenomena in question and must expand this involvement not only to include the relation with the conversational partner but also to encourage the partner's engagement with the notion. The researcher can allow the conversational partner to genuinely participate in this sense-making activity only when there is the attitude of openness and questioning that derives from a deep commitment to finding understanding. More specifically, this means that the relationship between the conversational partners must be one of trust and mutuality around the roles of interviewee as teacher and interviewer as learner. In human science investigation, data collection and interpretation overlap, and this is very evident in the conversational relation. There is an attention to what is not said that finds expression even in the questions that are asked, and the process must proceed within an awareness of this.

I initiated and conducted formal, recorded conversations with five women, asking them to describe a time when they had spoken up, and encouraging them to elaborate with as much detail as they could recall. I was aware of the need to avoid letting my assumptions and preconceptions frame my questions, or get in the way of the things which I heard, so I worked to create an interview environment where my partner would do most of the talking. Although I had developed a list of questions to use as a guide in the conversation, my role was primarily to introduce the research question and to attempt to keep the discussion oriented to it and focused on lived-experience. I attempted to extend my partner's speech by active listening, paraphrasing, and asking open-ended questions such as, "Can you tell me more about that?" or "Can you give me an example?" Once each conversation was transcribed, I gave or sent a copy of it to the woman whose story it contained, asking her to delete any information which she would rather not have used, or to add any further details that she could recall. No changes were made or requested.

Finding Meaning

Watching for themes.

Interpretation in human science research proceeds simultaneously with data collection. One of the primary activities in the researcher's effort to make sense of the data is watching for themes. Van Manen (1989) describes themes as structures of experience, likening them to "knots in the webs of our experiences" (p. 84). Tesch (1987) notes that themes tend to emerge in phenomenological research and that finding them is not something which can be forced, but depends upon reflection, readiness, openness and immersion in the data as a whole. Both Tesch and Van Manen describe two different approaches to delimiting meaning units, one in which the investigator proceeds line by line through the text, and the other in which the search is for particularly revealing statements.

I found that the themes of speaking up were slow to emerge, perhaps because I was so impatient to see them! I worked through the interview transcripts and the earlier written stories on a line by line basis, then through all of the material many times looking for revealing statements. In the end, I organized the data around three major themes which became chapters in my writing: The Speaking Body relates to the bodily experience of speaking up; Showing One's Self Through Speech has to do with seeing oneself through the eyes of another; Speaking Up/Speaking With is concerned with relations with others as shown in speech. Each of these themes contains several subthemes.

Writing and rewriting.

Hermeneutic-phenomenological research is basically a writing activity. More precisely it is a writing and re-writing activity, where the researcher both comes to understand through writing and struggles to represent understanding in writing. The significance of writing as a research act derives naturally from the hermeneutic involvement with language, where the goal of interpretation is bringing to language those things which are hidden. Writing is simultaneously a distancing and a bringing forward. In writing, we externalize the thoughts that have been inside, laying them out where they can be seen and judged. This process lets us see what we know, for there may be more there than we would have imagined. Writing distances us from lived experience, while creating a deeper awareness of it, and distances us from practice while allowing us to engage in it more reflectively. As a further paradox, we find that such writing speaks partially through silence, so that the reader is required to participate in the attitude of attentive awareness which characterizes the research. (Van Manen, 1989)

The writing of this work has proceeded over three years and innumerable drafts, and I have concluded that phenomenological writing is characterized by drafts that are never quite complete, because by the time the end is near, the writer's new understanding demands a different organization. To allow for silence in the finished work was a major area of difficulty for me, accustomed as I am to figuring things out and then telling people about my conclusions. I have tried to engage and suggest, but not as successfully as I would have wished.

Criteria for Appraisal

> A full set of experiences, meetings, instructions and disappointments do not conjoin in the end to mean that one knows everything, but rather than one is aware and has learned a degree of modesty. (Gadamer, 1975, p. 189)

As Gadamer's comments suggest, hermeneutic phenomenology is not directed toward the discovery of absolutes, but rather to a way of being in which there is a commitment to understanding despite the impossibility of ever really knowing. The text which is produced in the course of the research will reflect understanding if it conveys the essence of the phenomena in a perceptive and compelling way, and the work will be useful to the extent that it provokes thoughtfulness and sensitivity in relation to the phenomena in question; in this case, women's experience of speaking up.

The integrity of human science research arises from characteristics of the researcher: from the openness that accompanies a commitment to finding truth, from the courage to allow truth to emerge despite prior contradictory assumptions, from persistence and skill. There are several ways that researchers can demonstrate their process such that others can judge the value of their work. One of these is by providing what Geertz (1972) calls "thick description," in-depth detail regarding the persons, situations and settings that are a part of the research, to enable the reader to see the basis for conclusions. This seems to be a necessary part of hermeneutic-phenomenological research. Another is the thorough documentation of the research process such that others could follow the course of the study and determine whether the process and conclusions appear to be reasonable. This would, of course, have to occur within the assumption that the meanings constructed between the researcher and the text, or the researcher and the conversational partner, are unique to those relations. In my study, this documentation is found in my research journal, in the interview tapes and accompanying transcripts, in the lived-experience descriptions which I have gathered, and in the many drafts of my written work.

The core of this exploration, then, is a hermeneutic-phenomenological inquiry into the experience of speaking up. The investigation draws upon recorded conversations, written accounts, and anecdotal material gathered from many women, as well as upon the learning journals of female students. While the process of inquiry is important, the life and breath of the exploration derives from the women who contributed so enthusiastically to it, and from the stories--poignant, triumphant, wistful, even hilarious--which they tell. Chapter Three tells some of these stories of speaking up, and describes my beginning attempts to learn about that experience.

CHAPTER THREE

The Women and Their Stories

The Women

Mary and I sit in her sunny kitchen, our cups of tea before us. Her grandchildren's artwork is displayed on the fridge, and a beautiful hand-crocheted tablecloth covers the new round oak table. The tablecloth, Mary tells me, is one of several that she has completed recently, for her crocheting is something that she can carry with her on visits to family and neighbours, and when she and her husband travel. I, who have known Mary for years, see the tablecloth and the children's pictures as somewhat symbolic, for I know the pleasure that Mary takes in her immaculate, comfortable house is exceeded only by her pride in her family: the four children now grown, the seven grandchildren.

I have called Mary to ask if she would talk with me about speaking up, and she has accepted without hesitation. The "interview" is a good excuse for a visit, and there is no doubt but that it will take place at her home. I arrive and settle in the kitchen, for she is busy there making tea and assembling a snack. Once we are both seated, and have chatted a bit, I explain again the purpose of my visit,

> What I'd like to ask you to do is just to talk about a time when you spoke up, and tell me about it in as much detail as possible--it might help to imagine that I'm doing a TV documentary of it and want it to be as true to life as possible so I need to know all the details about what was happening and what you were feeling and thinking.

I go on to explain that I will type the transcript of her interview, changing her name and any identifying details, then return it to her so that she can read it over and make any changes or additions that she would like. We discuss this for awhile, then proceed to the incident that Mary has chosen to tell me about, of a confrontation with a next door neighbour who persists in parking cars, boats and snowmobiles on the edge of her property.

Mary's is one of five taped conversations that provide a part of the data for exploring speaking up. They were conversations that took place in various settings: the home of the woman with whom I spoke, my home, my office. My relationships with these five women varied, for some were new acquaintances and others, like Mary, I knew well. I approached three of the women simply because they had expressed an interest, and the others because I wished to speak with women of varying ages and life situations.

The taped conversations represent a small, though important, part of the data. Mary, and the others with whom I spoke--Emily, Kirsten, Karly, and Gwendolyn--are a few of about two hundred women who shared, or caught, my interest in speaking up and who then added to my information about that experience. Other women--students, friends, colleagues, casual acquaintances--contributed written stories, writings from student journals, and verbal anecdotes. In some ways, these women who participated in my exploration are very different from one another. They range in age from 19 to 75 years. Some have not completed high school, while others have doctoral degrees. About a third of the women were born in countries other than Canada, and the group of Canadians includes a number of native Canadian women. The thing which the women tend most to have in common is their concern with children, as teachers or caregivers, or as mothers or grandmothers. This is an involvement which is shared with most women in our society, but which may be accentuated by the fact that about three-quarters of the women are adult students studying early childhood education in university or college programs. Perhaps these women--these teachers who are students--have particular experiences of speaking up and, if so, they are experiences from which I, as a teacher of early childhood educators, can learn. My impression, however, is that the accounts are stories of women, rather than of a particular group of women: the women who read this work will be left to determine its applicability to them.

The Stories

> I was 18 years old, and working as a ski instructor at Pine Lodge. I was younger than many of the people I taught, and I was one of two female instructors. One day I found out that male instructors who were less qualified that I was were being paid considerably more. I stomped into the office and demanded to know what was going on. When they refused to give me a raise, I was totally demolished. (Brenda, notes from an informal conversation)

I began my exploration of speaking up by tentatively mentioning to almost every woman I met that I was interested in finding out about "Women Speaking Up." The responses were gratifying, "What a great topic! It's important for someone to look at that." Stories were proffered spontaneously, "I should tell you about a time..." I carefully recorded each account in my research journal, but often they seemed like pale reflections of the original animated anecdote. My words did not catch the voices trembling with anger, the eyes suddenly clouding with tears, as women recalled experiences which time would place years in the past, but which were obviously still accessible, still important. Nor did they capture the detail that became important as my analysis progressed. "What did she do after that?" or "How did the others' react?" were the kinds of questions that would remain unanswered. Still, these stories became a valuable part of my data, often serving to raise questions, or to support hunches. The enthusiasm with which they were offered helped to confirm that speaking up is a topic that is important to women, and dispelled any hesitation that I might have felt when asking women to write about their experiences of speaking up. Emma's story is one of these written accounts:

> Some years ago when my eldest daughter was starting school, my husband and I decided to give her an allowance every week. She was very excited about having her own money, and insisted we go shopping as soon as possible. We decided to go the drugstore, where she instructed me to wait outside while she chose and made her own purchase all by herself. After waiting for about ten minutes I entered the store and found her standing at the counter with a chocolate bar in her hand. The cashier was standing talking to a customer and ignoring my daughter. The cashier saw me and asked if he could help me. I informed him that there was a little girl before me. He said he would see to me first. I could see how upset my daughter was and I became annoyed. I asked the cashier if there was any reason he would not serve the child first. He hesitated and then said he would. I asked my daughter if she still wanted the chocolate bar. She quietly said no. I informed the cashier that the child was my daughter, and told him how disappointed I was that only adults were considered customers in his store. I also told him that, although I would still frequent his store, in the future my daughter would go elsewhere to purchase her treats. Although I was still annoyed with the cashier, I felt good to know that, at least for a while, he would be quite conscientious about treating children with the same courtesy as he did adults.
>
> (Emma, written account)

When I began to ask women to write about "A Time I Spoke Up," I found that, on the surface, there was often little in the written accounts to suggest the intensity that made the spoken stories so compelling. The suggestion of significance might be hidden in a poignant phrase, in the exclamation marks or the capital letters which peppered the story, in the lack of hesitation with which the writing was undertaken: "A time when I spoke up? Oh yes, then I must tell you about...." The value of the written accounts was in the ease with which I could gather about two hundred stories that, in their diversity and in their similarities, helped to suggest the nature of the speaking up experience. However, with the written stories, as with the anecdotal accounts, the lack of detail was often frustrating, and, later, I might yearn for the opportunity to pursue a particularly provocative statement. The taped conversations provided an opportunity for just such follow-up, yielding detailed written transcripts, of which this segment from an interview with Kirsten, is an example:

> K: Well, the events that lead up to it--you know, I went to a small town school and in terms of the town we were one of the families from the right side of the tracks and considered well off, etcetera, but we had lots of kids so you know, we were poor but we weren't broke. Or we were broke but not poor.
>
> C: (laughs)
>
> K: My dad would say, "We ain't poor we're just broke." No, he would never say "ain't." He'd say, "We aren't poor, we're just broke." And going to our school, a lot of children were bussed in. And we had a Mennonite group, we had Seventh Day Adventists and we had groups that I can't even attend to. I just knew that they weren't Catholic or Protestant which was the mainstay of the town.
> C: Yeah.
>
> K: And there was this young man I liked, you know, and he was from the wrong side of the tracks and the fellow who was in the other story whom I'm breaking up with was his brother, actually. But my first child love was his brother. His brother was kind of a bully. He was a macho, with-it kid.
>
> C: Now, this is not the one who became your boyfriend, this is the...
>
> K: No, this is in grade nine. And he didn't do well in school for whatever reason. He came from an alcoholic home. They were Metis. And what happened was, there was another young fellow and his name was John, and he was Seventh Day

Adventist so of course they didn't say the Lord's Prayer and they didn't participate in any celebrations or anything and just to show the significance, like that year I was the president of the Student's Union so I mean I wasn't a non-speaking person but I came out into the hallway--we had a round school--there was a central library and all of the classrooms were off it--and our classroom in grade nine--this is eight or nine, I'm not sure which. And I come out and he, the fellow, the young fellow that I kind of like, and he and two other fellows, I don't remember who they are, I think I might remember but I don't remember their names, they're standing there and this John, the Seventh Day Adventist, is backed against the wall and they're kind of taunting him and he has on, like, this shirt, it's like an old sweater type, kind of raggy shirt that's obviously come from the lost and found so I make the assumption that they are intimidating him and they have made him put this shirt on. And so he's standing there and he doesn't look angry, he looks like he's waiting them out. You know. And I immediately go up and I just light into them. I wasn't abusive in that sense, I was quite direct in terms of what did they think they were doing, who did they think they are."He has as much value as you do," I mean, I'm really for fairness and justice here and they---I thought they would laugh and giggle at me so I don't know what my words were exactly but whatever they were I can see them backing off and then I turned to him and I said, "And take that shirt off! You don't need to wear that and you don't need to listen to them!" You know, and then he kind of, I can remember him crossing his arms and putting them down and then he walks off to the lost and found, I think, and takes it off. And these--I'm not sure what word I used but my final statement, what I would use today would be to look at them and say, "Creeps!", you know, but I'm not sure what word I used but I did say something. That was the other event. Which was really risky for me because I did like this young man--I never liked that part of him but I was attracted to him in other ways but that had crossed my line so I had...

C: Were there any repercussions from that?

K: None! None whatsoever. It was never mentioned again. I didn't experience any, you know, they didn't get down on me. He, the young man who had the shirt on, he never said anything to me about it again so, I don't know, it was like an event and it went away and I don't think I spent much time thinking about it at the time but I'll always remember it. It was one of my school memories that I always recall.

C: Did it feel good afterwards, or did you have some qualms or doubts?

K: Oh yes! I remember feeling justified and still indignant, you know, and I remember being very much that way. I had no qualms about it whatsoever. I think I was just surprised that I had had impact, that these guys actually backed off.

C: Yeah. Backed off and stopped. My picture of them is backing up a few steps and standing there watching...

K: Yeah.

C: And then you flounce out.

K: Yeah. No, I don't remember leaving. I don't remember leaving. Maybe the bell rang. I don't remember what happened after that.

C: Um-hmm. But it surprised you that you had impact. Are there other times...

K: Yeah, it was a surprise when I had impact. I guess when you talk about risk, I think I really risked because you can speak up or speak out and know the situation and have all of your bases covered but I think what's more significant or stays more in your memory are those where it's a surprise to you that you risked the speaking up and you had impact.

C: So the surprise was that you did it in the first place and then that you had impact?

K: Oh no. The surprise was that I had impact. I'm not surprised that I spoke up.

This exchange is actually only a part of a longer, taped, conversation which includes two stories of speaking up. The transcript of the entire conversation filled 15 single-spaced pages, which meant that, in length, it was neither the longest of the recorded conversations (the longest transcript was 26 pages) nor the shortest (9 pages). As a conversation about a particular incident, this segment is atypical in its brevity, but it still suggests the contextual richness that was made possible by the conversational format. The one to two hour conversations, and the subsequent contact with the women, provided ample opportunities for details to be recalled and noted, and for explanation and reflection. In face-to-face discussion, the conversationalists seemed to take the time and opportunity to go back into the experience, reliving the frustration, the indignation, the satisfaction, the disappointment that were a part of it. The change into the present tense which is shown in Kirsten's story did not occur in each case, but typifies, I believe, the immediacy with which the women experienced an event often long past. The written transcripts of the conversations still appear as simple and matter-of-fact renditions of events that were recounted with passion and sometimes wonder. "It was the most dreadful yet wonderful experience," Karly recalls, and her words say some of what others showed in their faces and voices and bodies as they spoke.

As I noted in Chapter Two, my interaction with women about speaking up extended beyond gathering stories from them to much discussion both in and out of classes about the nature of speaking up. As the study progressed, I found that I could present my ideas about speaking up in an increasingly integrated and coherent way, and so I was able to say to friends and students, "This is how I'm seeing speaking up right now. How does that fit with your experience?" These exchanges became an invaluable part of my research process, giving me opportunities to clarify, check, and try out ideas. I hope that they were also useful, in some way, to the women who listened so caringly and replied with such thoughtfulness.

The speaking up stories were gathered, then, as anecdotal accounts, as stories written by women, and as formal, transcribed conversations. Although the recorded conversations provided the most opportunity for elaboration and questioning, the written accounts were invaluable as a broader reference, placing the experience of speaking up within the larger context of many possible experiences, many possible situations, many possible meanings. The anecdotal accounts were most often a part of my research journal, "Today Maureen told me about.... Her story made me think about...." The written and recorded stories of women's speaking up acted as an on-going point of reference throughout the process of coming to better understand the nature of that experience. As my exploration progressed, I was also able to involve women in "thinking about" speaking up by asking them to compare their experiences with my own developing understandings. Gathering data about speaking up occurred simultaneously with the process of analysis, in a cyclical process of listening and questioning. While Chapter Three focuses upon the women and the stories that they told, Chapter Four will describe some of the "listening and re-listening" which was a part of coming to understand the experience of speaking up.

CHAPTER FOUR

Listening to the Stories of Speaking Up

Where Chapter Three told of gathering the narratives of speaking up, Chapter Four will address the process which is inextricably linked to it, that of finding meaning and coming to better understanding. One of the difficulties in writing about this aspect of the exploration manifests itself grammatically: Should I write in the past tense, as if the exploration is complete, or should I place my investigation in the present, underlining its immediacy and continuation? I opt for the latter course, for I hope that the listening and questioning, the listening and re-listening, will always be a part of my teaching, of my interactions with others, of my being-in-the-world. A second, and interrelated, problem is one of finding a way to trace the circuitous and tangled path toward understanding, and to represent an ending which hasn't been reached. I choose to depict my journey as a process of listening to the stories in various ways where listening is, as Gadamer (1975) describes it, an attitude of openness. Thus I listen to the ways that women speak about speaking up; listen to stories of "wishing I had spoken up"; listen to find the identity of the one-spoken-to and what is said; and listen for common threads among the stories. Listening from different directions and struggling to represent my understanding in writing seems to bring me closer to defining and locating the experience which is speaking up. The intent of Chapter Four is to show something of this process and, in so doing, to tie the themes of speaking up to the stories from which they are derived.

Beginning

Hoping to find common threads in the stories which women told about times when they spoke up, I am at first overwhelmed by what seems to be many very different kinds of conditions for speaking up. Some situations occur in a group setting, but many other instances involve only two people. In some accounts, the speaking up is planned in advance, in others it seems to be spontaneous. Usually the incident takes place in a face-to-face situation, but occasionally it happens indirectly, through another person, or by letter or phone. Frequently the speakers are acting on behalf of someone else, but in some stories they are acting in their own interests. In this preliminary overview of speaking up, more seems to vary than to be the same.

Webster's definition, "to speak strongly or vigorously; to speak loudly or distinctly; to express an opinion freely and fearlessly," (Gove, 1971) provides a different vantage point, but it takes only a cursory glance through some of the stories of speaking up to determine that speaking strongly, distinctly, and fearlessly is at most only a part of the complex experience which is speaking up. In fact, the diversity within the speaking up stories leads me to wonder briefly if there is, indeed, a speaking up, or if it is a term that lumps together several kinds of actions. I notice, for example, that when the women write about speaking up they also write about "standing up for myself," "standing up for my rights," and, interchangeably with speaking up, "speaking out." Is speaking up only my term, then, one which other women translate into different words? Still, when I ask women about a time when they spoke up, they write and speak with assurance, never asking for clarification. In their minds, it seems that there must be an experience that is speaking up, and it is the nature of that experience which I am determined to better understand.

What is this experience of speaking up that it can encompass such a variety of conditions but still have an identity in the minds of women? The meaning of speaking up lies within the stories which describe that action, but it may lurk, too, in the ways that women talk about it, that is, in the opinions they express about speaking up and its significance in their lives.

Listening to Women Talk about Speaking Up

The "talking about" speaking up seems almost invariably to surface in the introductions and conclusions of the written speaking up stories. Thus Christina begins her account with these words, "There was a time when I spoke up for myself at my job, to my boss. I was horrified, but knew that my side of the story needed to be told." She ends by saying, "Since then I have more respect for my boss and I know she has more respect for me." Tara's first sentences read, "I have always had a problem speaking up--period. Although I have found it extremely difficult to speak up for myself it has been easier to speak up for other people," and she comments at the end, "It was probably a speaking out incident that anyone else wouldn't think twice about, but for me at the time it was a big deal." Although the taped conversations followed a somewhat different format, with more time for reflection and for "doubling back" to pick up thoughts and details, they too tended to be introduced by comments that placed a particular speaking up incident into the larger context of each woman's life. Karly, for example, begins by explaining that,

> I think that probably--for me speaking up is a very painful thing because it's very unusual that I do it. Very, very difficult for me to do it. ...It can't be done without feeling guilty. It can't be done without feeling like it's a tremendous risk. And to do it I usually have to be pushed off the edge. You know, the situation has to be so grossly wrong in some way. ...But I find that very slowly I'm speaking up a little bit more and it's less threatening the more I've done it. I can remember times when I'd speak up to make the gas station attendant serve me more politely or something, and speaking up in that regard would upset me so much that I'd be just be upset for hours and hours, you know. But now I

> find that I'm able to handle situations more.
> (Karly, taped conversation)

At first, trying to focus upon the actual experience of speaking up, I tend to see these initial comments as a necessary but not-terribly-useful prelude. Eventually, I realize their value as an orientation to how women see themselves in relation to speaking up, and to the significance that the speaking up situation holds for them. When Tara writes, "I have always had a problem speaking up--period," and goes on to describe a time when she did exactly that, she is telling of an action that is difficult for her, that is "out-of-character," she reveals something of the way she sees herself, as a person who has a problem speaking up. To group and analyze these comments about speaking up seems premature and presumptuous, however, when the words of the women speak so clearly and strongly:

> I am a quiet person and something has to be very important to me in order for me to speak up. Maybe I am afraid what I say will not "come out" right or perhaps I will face rejection. I know, also, that I am sensitive. Anyway, I am getting more confident and less sensitive and more able to speak for myself. (Ruth, written account)

> I don't know where I summoned up the strength. I had never verbally disagreed or disobeyed my parents before...
> (Marilyn, written account)

> It was hard for me to remember a time when I did speak up for myself. My theory was to take the blame for everyone--then the argument would be over and we could all get back to living. This is how most of my life went. As long as everyone was happy it was no problem for me.
> (Paulette, written account)

> I don't think I speak up very much. When I started thinking about whether I spoke up a lot, and what kinds of situations I spoke up in, there's not an awful lot of them....I speak up on behalf of other people, not on behalf of myself. I think I find it very hard to speak up--I don't

> know if I ever have--just for myself. So that's almost not speaking up.
>
> (Gwendolyn, taped conversation)

How do we experience speaking up, that we do it so seldom, that we have to "summon up strength" in order to do it, that we do it for others but not for ourselves? How is it possible that an action which can be so difficult, such a risk, would still be one which we would seem to value? The opening statements of the written accounts and of the conversations suggest pieces of a speaking up puzzle, and the closing sentences often provide more information, usually about the benefits which we see in that action:

> Till today whenever I think of that particular incident I feel really good about myself for standing up for my rights.
>
> (Maria, written account)

> But after that, it never happened that somebody can bully me or boss me around. Now I am courageous and bold. I tell the person if I don't like something.
>
> (Inez, written account)

> Sometimes I have to muster a lot of courage, but usually I have been very happy with myself for speaking up about something that mattered to me.
>
> (Ruth, written account)

> All I wanted was some changes in the school, which I got. I couldn't believe it. After that I made more and more change. What a good feeling.
>
> (Heather, written account)

> After that incident, I am not afraid to speak out for myself any more because I feel I owe it to myself to do so.
>
> (Anna, written account)

> I had never been the type to speak out in front of a group before and I really haven't much since, but I remember how good it felt.
>
> (Joanne, written account)

> After I spoke up, I felt relieved, proud and delighted that my point was seen. I felt special that I was recognized from then on and respected.
> (Angela, written account)

There is little here of the ambivalence that I note in my own speaking up experience when I challenge the speakers' use of male pronouns at a staff development function. These statements show pride and satisfaction, and suggest that the incident could mark a turning point at which we began to speak up more often and more easily. The action may bring about change, and our success might encourage us to try again.

A few of the stories of speaking up, perhaps three or four, describe speaking up not as an unusual or difficult behavior, but as "something I do all the time." Even in these accounts, however, speaking up seems to exist as an action that is clearly distinguishable from "just talk." Eileen's comments provide one such example:

> The only times I can think of when I spoke up are probably at staff meetings--spoke up in defense of something no doubt, or someone. Because I speak a lot with my jobs (especially when I taught school or worked with adults), I tend to not remember the times when I spoke up as being different, because I'm always talking!! They are not different in my mind from say, voting yes or no to something. If I spoke up in defense of something I had strong feelings for the issue/person and wanted to do my part to support the issue or person.
> (Eileen, written account)

Eileen's remarks contain a definition of speaking up as defending something or someone that she believes in, and that, rather than the difficulty of speaking or the unusualness of the action seems, for her, to be a distinguishing characteristic. It is a quality that is reflected in some of the phrases frequently associated with speaking up, such as "standing up for what I believe in" or "taking a stand." Some women, like Louise, assume this meaning when I ask them to write about speaking up: "Having been asked to write a description of an incident where I "spoke up" to defend a principal in which I truly believed would probably have been an impossible task for me prior to 1981." Looking back to the stories of speaking up I find that women refer to speaking up for their own rights, for something they believe in, for the benefit of another person, all usages which seem to be potentially compatible with the meaning that Eileen defines. Perhaps, then, this is another dimension to the speaking up puzzle, where we find that speaking up, in addition to usually being out-of-character, difficult and valued, has to do with defending something in which we believe.

The "talking about" speaking up which is found in the stories of speaking up experiences offers a beginning point for looking into particular aspects of the speaking up stories. I find, for example, that the perception of speaking up as creating change is evident in many of the stories.

Speaking Up as a Possibility for Change

That speaking up can be seen as involving a possibility for change in our relationship with another, in our view of ourselves, in the external conditions of our existence, is shown clearly in Marilyn's story:

> Christmas vacation was nearing, and I had informed the grandparents in Regina that Carl and I and our two children would be visiting. As the day neared, my usual feelings of tension mounted. Our visits to Regina amounted to days of running back and forth from my parent's house to Carl's mom's apartment, attempting to spend equal time with each, trying to persuade the children to spend time with their grandparents so feelings wouldn't be offended, trying to ease Carl's silent frustration of forever being told what to do, knowing it seldom included a visit to any of our friends. This had been the scenario for twelve years, so when my mother called to get our specific departure date and arrival time, I was no less anxious than any other time, mentally prepared for criticisms of plans. I informed my

> mother that Carl had to work on the 23rd, so we would arrive on the Saturday. Immediately, she fell into a lament about how she had planned and so looked forward to a dinner on Friday because we'd all be over at Mom D's on Sunday. My heart pounded and I immediately fell into the well tread guilt trap. How could I manipulate events so my mother's plans could come off? Maybe Carl could change shifts (almost impossible on holidays); maybe the kids and I could take the bus a day earlier (an added expense I couldn't really afford). I fretted to a state of nausea in those few moments. Suddenly I recalled a book I had just read, Pull Your Own Strings, and this was a typical situation I just had no control over: Carl had to work. In that split second, I also recalled how I'd felt when reading the book, how good it would feel to be able to say those things and not suffer guilt and remorse afterwards. I recall frantically thinking that maybe this was the time to finally stand up and take control of my life, if only I could find the right words and the right tone of voice. If only--I always thought that way, letting opportunities slip by and cursing myself afterwards. And, then, the words just came. "That sounds like it would be nice," I recall saying, "but Carl is working on the 23rd and we can't come till Saturday. There is nothing I can do about it." I recall this incident so clearly because it was the very first time I had stepped out of the "dutiful daughter" role and, without anger, had stood up for myself. It is also the first time my mother knew she could not manipulate a situation to her liking. The silence after my statement was dreadful. Then her reply, minus the whine, "I'm disappointed, but if that's the way it is, that's the way it is." I can remember the wave of utter relief and confidence that came over my whole being. For a few years following, I fell back into the role a few times, but for the most part I have spoken up for myself since then.
>
> (Marilyn, written account)

Sometimes we may enlist the aid of others in order to bring about change. We speak, not to the person with whom we have the problem, but through someone whom we see as having more power than ourselves to bring about a desired change:

> The time I spoke up, I remember I was in elementary school. Whenever I remember those days, I laugh to myself to think what a "scaredy cat" I was in elementary school. One of my classmates was always bullying me and taking my money all the time and also I used to carry his backpack and lunchbox home after school. He told me that if I told my parents or teacher on him, he would beat me up. Poor me--I was very much a scaredy cat. I would not even tell my best friend. This went on and on. Finally after more than a month, I got the courage by the help of God to tell on him to my teacher and also to my mom and dad. Then he got in big trouble from the teacher and never bothered me again till I finished my elementary school. But after that it never happened that somebody can bully me or boss me around. Now I am very courageous and bold. I tell the person if I don't like something.
> (Inez, written account)

Adults, too, sometimes speak up indirectly. When she can no longer tolerate the fact that her neighbour's old cars are parked partially on her property, Mary calls the by-law enforcement office to register a complaint. Her action brings results in a situation where she feels a direct request would be ineffective. This aspect of speaking up indirectly, through a person or agency, seems to be a side of speaking up that is directly linked to the desire to bring about change.

The ways in which women talk about speaking up also prompt me to explore more fully the perception that speaking up is a good thing to do.

Speaking Up as a Good Thing to Do

It seems that when we think of speaking up, we usually think of it this way: as something that is difficult, but a good thing to do. We value speaking up, we feel that it is something that we would like to do more easily and often. Like Maria, we may "feel really good" ourselves when we speak up. We can "hold (our) head up high (Annette), or be "very happy" with ourselves (Ruth). We may, like Inez, Heather, and Anna, see a particular time of speaking up as representing a turning point in our lives, the time when we begin to speak up more. It seems that there is a kind of "taking charge" in speaking up, a choice that we have made.

Even when we don't see the outcome of speaking up as particularly successful, we may, like Gwendolyn, find some value in it:

> I think probably I didn't change anybody's mind on the issue. ...The only good thing, the only good result I can see out of it, was that Carey (her daughter) knew that I went and made a fuss.
> (Gwendolyn, taped conversation)

Although we might not achieve the desired result, we may be determined to continue with our efforts:

> A time when I spoke up was about two weeks ago at a community league meeting. I was feeling frustrated before the meeting about some of the policies in the community. So I voiced my opinion and I felt better for saying what was on my mind, although nothing changed. I'll try again for some improvements next meeting.
> (Darlene, written account)

In contrast to the many accounts that relate the satisfaction of speaking up, a few of the stories that I heard and read do tell of later regrets. Jennifer describes being "nailed" by classmates for a statement that she made in class, and concludes, "I wish I had kept my mouth shut." Indira returns to class the week after her husband has thrown her out of her home and writes bitterly, "I spoke up, and look where it got me. Now I have no place to live." We may find some value in an unsatisfactory resolution or be determined to continue our efforts to bring about change, but there is a possibility that we will decide that the cost of our speaking is too high.

Julie's regrets derive, not from any negative results of her speaking up, but from her own sense of how she should behave:

> A time when I spoke up was when my mom and dad were arguing. They were arguing about my younger sister quitting school. I spoke up and said, "Let her. If she wants to be dumb, fine." Before the situation I was feeling great, but afterwards I felt really bad, because I sure wasn't setting a good example for my younger sister. I felt afterwards that I should think more before I say something, especially if it's going to lead someone in the wrong direction.
> (Julie, written account)

Speaking up is usually an action that we value. Occasionally, though, we may come to regret our action. If speaking up fails to accomplish our purpose and engenders an unpleasant consequence, it is little wonder that we might wish we hadn't spoken. Julie's story shows that regret is possible even in the absence of a negative consequence, however, and suggests that doubts may derive from the nature, as well as the results, of the action. This is a possibility which questions the unequivocally positive quality of speaking up and also points to an aspect to consider in describing that experience.

The ways that women talk about speaking up suggest routes for our investigation, and this exploration may enhance or contradict that picture which has begun to form. We might, however, choose to move to a completely different vantage point, as I did in considering a set of stories which frame speaking up by their difference, that is, accounts of "wishing I had spoken up."

Listening to Stories of "Wishing I Had Spoken Up"

Early in my exploration of speaking up, I asked a woman of my mother's age if she would tell me a story about a time she had spoken up. She replied, with some distress it seemed to me, "I can think of lots of times when I could have spoken up, but I never did because I wouldn't have been listened to. I don't know if I can help you." The reply was unexpected, and the sense of futility which it seemed to convey touched me deeply. There was much in my response, of course, that told of my own valuing of speaking up, of another assumption to be questioned. Still, the discussion which followed, of times when she particularly wanted to speak up, added to my impression that there was sadness, regret and anger in the years of silence. I anticipated, then, that there might be other women who had this same experience, and because I wanted them not to feel excluded from my exploration, I often included an option in my request, "Could you tell me about a time when you spoke up or, if you'd rather, a time when you wish you would have spoken up?" Many women chose this alternative, to the point where I wondered if "wishing I had spoken" might be a much more common experience for women than speaking up. I considered the stories of "A Time I Wish I Had Spoken Up," as a backdrop to speaking up, one which would place that experience in sharper relief. And so I looked at Margaret's story, and at Norma's, and at the others.....

> This time happened a few years ago, when my sister and brother-in-law were moving out of their old shop of business into their new shop. My mother and I were helping them move, my sister and my mother left with a load of things for the new shop, and my brother-in-law and I were left to continue with the packing. I was sitting at a bench counting some bolts when my brother-in-law came up behind me and put his arms around me and invited me to join him on the sofa for a little fun. I was so shocked I didn't know what to say, so I just said I was busy counting, now you made me lose count. He left me and went back to work. I was very frightened then and wished my sister and my mother would hurry back. A little while went by and he invited me again to join him on the sofa. I never said anything, I was too afraid, and wished my sister and mother would hurry back. I continued with my counting, and huddled close to myself as I counted so as he couldn't touch any parts I didn't want him to touch--I didn't want him to touch me at all. I was quite frightened, about five minutes went by and my mother and my sister came back. I said to my sister I had to go home because I had my period and I always got pain with them and had to lie down, which was not true

> of course. I just wanted to get away from that monster. Mother knew I wasn't telling the truth, and asked me what was wrong. I said nothing, I was just tired. I should have told her right then and there, but I didn't....
>
> (Margaret, written account)

> My husband arrived at the hospital labour room about 1:00 a.m. He came in dressed for the delivery room but he changed his mind about coming in at the last minute. It was a short easy delivery and within minutes we had a beautiful son. I was overjoyed and couldn't wait to see the expression on my husband's face when he saw the baby. I asked the delivery staff if my husband could come in now. They all looked shocked by the idea and told me emphatically that it was too late for my husband to come in now. Then a nurse wrapped up my baby, our baby, and took him out to another room to show him to my husband. I was upset, furious, enraged, but I said nothing. Soon they wheeled me off to a recovery room where I waited alone for an hour. When a nurse finally came in and I asked where the rest of the family was she said my husband was rocking the baby in the nursery. I felt I'd been cheated out of one of my life's most precious moments. ... I just wish that I would have said something.
>
> (Norma, written account)

I was astonished by the number of women who chose to write about "A Time I Wished I Had Spoken Up." The stories appeared as "if only's," as tales of lingering and intense regret, needing to be told. Some stories, like Margaret's and Norma's, were records of single important incidents. Others told of a larger pattern.

> When I was married to my first husband, I wish I would have spoken up to him. We would always do whatever he wanted to do. He wouldn't ask me if I would like to go to the movies or go bowling. He would just say, "We are going to go bowling this Friday. And Saturday night I asked some people to come over for supper and play cards." I felt like telling him, "Who is going to cook supper because I'm not. I worked all day and looked after the baby." But all I could say was "OK, what time are they coming over?" I wanted to say something but knew I couldn't, because I knew he would get very angry with me. So I would just go along with him.

> I would have liked to sit at home with just the family. And watch t.v. and relax some times instead of going out all the time or having people over.
>
> (Amy, written account)

Afraid to speak. Upset, furious, enraged, but saying nothing. Afraid. Times of simmering emotion subdued, perhaps frozen, into silence. Closing off into a protective shell, trying to be safe from the world.

> I can think of many times when I didn't speak up. Ever since I remember which is mostly from 9 years and up. I don't know why I never tried to speak up. Sometimes I felt as though by not speaking I could block the world out.
>
> (Melinda, written account)

A story of wishing that we have spoken up is by definition a story of regret, not an antithesis to speaking up, but only another part of the puzzle. Still, there are striking contrasts between the stories of the two experiences: the sadness and bitterness of wishing to have spoken against the satisfaction of having done so; the bottling up of emotion and withdrawing inward versus the sense of a changing self, and of a self capable of creating change. And, interestingly enough, the plethora of stories about "wishing I had spoken" is offset by only two accounts which I mentioned above, of a speaking up later regretted. The frequency with which women have written about these different aspects of speaking up seems to reflect the perception that we share of speaking up as having value, and as something that we need to do more often.

I approached my task of exploring of speaking up from two perspectives, through women's comments about the experience, and through stories of "wishing I had spoken up." I also listened from different directions, generating possibilities to be questioned and explored. The nature of the speech act offers a third focus, for there is one obvious link among all of the stories. By definition, all of the situations involve speech and, in speaking up, the speech always is directed to another person. The characteristics of that other person, the one-spoken to, seem, then, to provide yet another departure point for locating that experience which is speaking up.

Listening for the Ones-Spoken-To

The stories of speaking up show that the ones spoken-to, the persons who are the focus of our speech, are employers, colleagues, teachers, mothers and other relatives, and sometimes peers. Incidents involving employers were typical:

> The time I really spoke up was the time the director at the daycare had changed my schedule for work and hadn't bothered to tell me. That day it was -23 degrees. She had changed my time to start work from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. I had taken a bus and I almost froze. When at 8:00 I could have gotten a ride with my son to work. This made me very angry. When the director came in at 10 I spoke up what I felt and next time this happens I'll leave and not come back.
> (Margaret, written account)

> I remember a few years ago when I was working for an insurance company; the president announced the relocation of our office to Toronto. He also talked about employees that are not transferring will have an option of staying till the end and a bonus will be given. When I discovered that the secretarial staff was not given a severance package, I was angry and needed to speak out for myself. I had a sleepless night that night before I went to speak to the president, tossing and turning and figuring out what I wanted to say. I felt I needed to speak out for myself, whether that resulted in anything or not, because it just seemed so unfair. The next morning I made an appointment to talk to him, I tried to control myself, not breaking out into tears because I really felt it was unjustified. It was hard talking out your feelings at the time but I felt very relieved afterwards about speaking out for myself. Although I didn't accomplish what I wanted at the time, I showed my dissatisfaction by trying to find another job at once and left the company. After that incident, I am not afraid to

> speak out for myself any more because I feel I owe it to myself to do so.
>
> (Anna, written account)

Tracey's story was one of many concerning colleagues in a work situation:

> This is when I was working with this one girl. She kept telling me that I was too slow. I just got fed up being called slow and I told her not to be so bossy. When I said this to her, the tension in the air was really high. I decided that I would not want to work with this girl again. But as time went on she said she was sorry and I told her I was sorry. Maybe she felt a lot of pressure put on her. I felt a lot better speaking up for myself. It gave me a feeling I could assert myself.
>
> (Tracey, written account)

Many other accounts involved speaking up to peers:

> One occasion when I am glad that I spoke up was when I was attending school in Montreal. During a recess break I was in the washroom and a group of Caucasian girls walked in. They started by making racist remarks to me and also threatened to get my face kicked in. This made me so mad that I dared them to a fight. I think my daringness saved my skin. Till today whenever I think of that particular incident I feel really good about myself for standing up for my rights.
>
> (Asafi, written account)

Several women wrote or told of speaking up to their mothers, more frequently as children, but also as adults. Nazim's is one of the childhood memories:

> I remember when I was ten years old, my mother said to me that I don't listen to anybody, I like to do things in my own way. I was really sad and I felt very bad because I was the only child in the family who was listening and working and helping her all the time. I was really mad and I spoke out and told her that in the future I am not going to help you and listen to you because you don't appreciate whatever I am doing for you. Then my mother gave me hugs and she realized that she was wrong to say that to me.
>
> (Nazim, written account)

Supervisors, teachers, mothers and other relatives, peers: these are almost invariably the spoken-to in the stories of speaking up, and they are almost always female. Husbands and fathers are so seldom noted as the recipients of this kind of speech that the instances where they are mentioned are memorable: Indira speaks up to her husband and is thrown out of the house; Karly speaks up in writing to her father, but also to her husband and his parents. Is there something about the nature of speaking up that is shown in the fact that the one-spoken-to is usually female? Struggling to come to possible explanations, I remind myself that many of the stories are written by women who work in early childhood education, where their colleagues and supervisors tend to be female. Still, they do have husbands, fathers, male friends and relatives. Where are they in the stories of speaking up?

Except in stories where a woman tells of speaking up, as a child, to other children, children are also noticeably absent as recipients of speaking up. The sole exception is found in Amy's story of silently "speaking up" to her teenaged son about his poster display of semi-nude females by mounting her own "Playmate" pictures on the kitchen cupboards. Is it something about our relationship with children that makes speaking up unnecessary? Is this true as well, then, for our male relatives, or are the reasons for their absence from the stories of speaking up very different ones? What is speaking up that its occurrence seems to be linked to gender and role-related relationships? They are questions to be kept in mind, for they will become a part of the investigation, resurfacing in various contexts and at different times.

When we speak, we usually speak to someone, and about something. Although the topics of speaking up vary widely, it seems that the aspect of speaking-for is significant, in that women both wrote about, and discussed the relationship between, speaking for themselves and speaking for someone else.

Listening for the Ones-Spoken-For

> I speak up on behalf of other people, not on behalf of myself. I think I find it very hard to speak up--I don't know if I ever have--just for myself. So that's almost not speaking up.
>
> (Gwendolyn, taped conversation)

Gwendolyn's comments are certainly suggestive of the meaning which she ascribes to speaking up; a meaning which moves beyond "speaking up for something I believe in," to "speaking up for myself." When I look through the stories of speaking up, however, I find that many of the situations involve speaking up for others. Jana's story is one of these:

> When I was about ten years old and my younger brother, Matthew, was six, there was an incident when my parents blamed Matthew for something he did not do. But since he was labelled and usually he was the troublemaker, they automatically thought it was him. But really it was me! So I spoke up--they were in shock. I don't remember what the incident was about, but I do remember sticking up for Matthew.
>
> (Jana, written account)

In other accounts, however, women tell of defending themselves or of requesting something that they desire:

> It was brought up at one of the Board meetings by our new assistant director that the teachers in the pre-school room had a better program compared to the toddler's room and that the reason for that was because the teachers there are taking Early Childhood classes. I was very unhappy with that statement, so I pointed out to her that I have done a few courses in Early Childhood but was not at that time taking a course. I also pointed out to her that both the preschool room and the toddler's room carry the same theme but in order to meet the needs of the toddlers we have to gear down. I went on to say that we have some neat and interesting things planned for the toddlers but due to the nature of our schedule sometimes we don't get the time or the opportunity to carry

> through with some of our plans. I also mentioned to her that it wasn't very nice the way she presented her statements to try to humiliate and intimidate us. It was not acceptable the way in which she handled the situation and I would appreciate it if she could be more reasonable in the future. I also mentioned how unprofessional it was to display such a letter for everyone to see. Often times I would just sit back and not say much but this was a time I knew I just couldn't sit back and not express what I was really feeling.
>
> (Jamilla, written account)

> The mother of a physically handicapped child whom I knew was planning to enrol her child in a nearby kindergarten. We were talking one day and I said, "I would really like to go in to kindergarten as your daughter's assistant." The mother knew I had had experience as a teacher of young children, and as a mother. Still, I knew it was quite possible she had someone else in mind since this type of work is quite sought after by women in the neighbourhood. Mrs. R. began to lobby in the school on my behalf and after much deliberation I got the job.
>
> (Ruth, written account)

Earlier, I noted Tara's beginning statement that "I have always had a problem speaking up--period. Although I have found it extremely difficult to speak up for myself it has been easier to speak up for other people." If we juxtapose her statement with Gwendolyn's, we see a situation where speaking up is almost defined by its difficulty: "it has been easier to speak up for other people," but speaking up for others is "almost not speaking up." Since the stories of speaking up encompass speaking for others and for oneself, is it the difficulty of the action which becomes a part of defining speaking up?

Difficult but valued and satisfying; creating change; advocating for self and others: bits of the puzzle combine to form a barely distinguishable shape. I listen and re-listen to the stories to hear what they say, but I also listen to the world outside of them, the real setting in which we live our experience of speaking up.

Listening for Common Usage: Speaking Up in Class

As I read and listen for references to speaking up, I become aware of a meaning which seems to be widely used, but which differs in some ways from that implied in the stories which I have gathered. My awareness of this other meaning begins when Marcie mentions that she is trying to speak up more frequently in her university classes. She comments that she usually remains silent in her classes, for fear of "saying something stupid," but that now she is making a real effort to speak up. In fact, she remarks that, "I don't know if what I'm saying is right, but at least I've said something."

I can remember the agony of sitting through class as a student, burning to speak, but afraid. Now I am reminded frequently of that feeling by my students, who write in their journals that, "I usually don't say anything when the whole class is discussing. I'm not sure that people will agree, or I think they might laugh at me." Certainly there is difficulty in this speaking up, and there is risk, for we do not know what will happen as a result of our talking. It seems, though, that this speaking up in class is different in some ways from the experiences which are recounted in the stories of speaking up. Wishing to pursue this impression, I turn to the written accounts of speaking up in a similar setting, that is, in the classroom.
Joanne's story is one of these:

> Two years ago I took a course called "Professional Development." It was an extensive and very soul searching course. My instructor was good and seemed to challenge each and every one of us. One day he began talking about different illnesses, sore throats, headaches etc., saying that these are brought on by ourselves, our own actions and feelings. Prior to this statement, I had just sat back in my seat and not added too much to the discussion. But, having done some nursing and

> dealt with really sick patients, I totally disagreed with him--and actually stood up and said so. We argued back and forth for about five minutes. Then I realized that most of the class were listening AND AGREEING with me. I had never been the type to speak out in front of a group before and I really haven't much since, but I remember how good it felt.
>
> (Joanne, written account)

There is more in Joanne's story than Marcie's determination to say something, perhaps almost anything, in class. When Joanne speaks, she is actively contradicting her instructor. The only other account of speaking up in a classroom is Paulette's, and it also has to do with an act of confrontation:

> I never talked back to a teacher or adult. It was my life if I did. A teacher I had once in grade school. She was a hard person. She would strap or punish children who were French--she was French--children with low self-esteem. My aunt quit school in Grade 8 because of her. She gave me a hard time till one day in Grade 8 I got mad--furious is the word. Education Week was one week away and she made a Grade 7 student do her apron for her Home Ec. project over again. The apron was fine. I told the teacher off. She was going to expel me and I told her, "Fine!" After that I never had a problem with her and I had her for four more years in Home Ec.
>
> (Paulette, written account)

Joanne's and Paulette's stories are the only two which appear in an actual classroom situation, although another account tells of a private speaking up, one which might also be described as a confrontation, with a teacher. All of these stories seem to tell of something quite different from Marcie's experience of speaking with difficulty, of gathering together courage and of waiting for a time. There is the confrontational nature of the latter exchanges, the defense of "something I believe in," the indignation or anger. There is an immediacy to the action, a sense of "jumping right in" rather than deliberating or postponing.

I am reluctant to exclude the experience of speaking up in class from my exploration of speaking up, for it seems at first to provide a way to link my investigation with classroom practice. Still, women's stories of speaking up do not reflect this usage, and to adopt it at this point would eliminate characteristics which are unfailingly present in the stories which they write.

My intention in this chapter is not to detail an actual process of analysis, but to show some of the ways that phenomenological themes begin to emerge when one listens to the data in various ways. What comes forward from each listening are possibilities and questions; what materializes from listening and re-listening is a beginning shape and form. The process of representing emerging understanding in writing, when approached with the openness that listening represents, creates further understanding.

The questions and possibilities which evolve when there is an attitude of openness begin to take shape as tentative themes. There is a suggestion of themes in the listenings described above: a portrayal of speaking up as difficult but valued, as closely related to our image of ourself, as possibly creating change, as confrontational in nature, as involving a high level of emotion, as tied to "defending something I believe in," and as related in some way to the quality or nature of a relationship between individuals.

What is it that we might see in these threads of description? Perhaps the valuing of speaking up derives from the possibilities we see in it: the potential for bringing about change may be one of these and, in so doing, we may be defending something we believe in. As we have seen, too, the "something we believe in" may include ourselves, because we may be speaking up to defend ourselves or to achieve a desired goal. The way in which women describe speaking up supports this tie with the image of self, for speaking up may be seen as unusual, out-of-character or, in one woman's word, "out of the blue and not common to my nature." The possibilities of speaking up may extend, then, to a changing image of self, a potential which is reflected in remarks such as this, "After that incident, I am not afraid to speak out for myself any more because I feel I owe it to myself to do so" (Anna, written account).

We seem to see possibilities in speaking up, but we also see a great deal of difficulty. Perhaps this difficulty is tied to the risk of an unusual or new action, or maybe it has to do with the confrontational nature of speaking up. In any case, the potential which we perceive in speaking up seems to be clearly balanced by the difficulty or risk of the action, to the extent that we may be reluctant to speak, or surprised when we do speak up.

When we contrast some of the stories of speaking up with a situation of speaking up in class, we see the confrontational nature of the act as well as difference around aspects of deliberation or premeditation. Even though we may be responding to circumstances that have bothered us for some time, when we do speak there is something of an element of surprise. And with the surprise, there are particular kinds of emotion: anger, frustration, indignation. We experience speaking up through our body, and the way that we experience it may be tied to the fact that we take action at all. We are angry, and we speak immediately, without hesitation.

I have described the act of speaking up as confrontational, and in this description is a suggestion of a transaction between individuals. To confront, says my dictionary, is "to stand face to face with." In order to stand face to face with another, we must not turn away, or back down. Perhaps there is an assumption of equality in confrontation; certainly Joanne and Paulette challenge the traditional roles of the student-teacher relation when they contradict their teachers. How is it that we experience the person we address when we speak up? How do we experience ourselves as we speak in this way to another?

Sartre (1965) and others remind us that our view of ourselves is rooted in the interpersonal, so that the way we see ourselves is tied to our perceptions of the reactions of others to us. Perhaps it is the interpersonal nature of speaking up, then, that provides the potential which we have noted for a changing image of self. Sartre roots his discussion of the interpersonal in the phenomena of being seen, and it is a reminder that speaking up is very much an act of making oneself visible, of stepping forward to be seen, of a voice where there was silence. Being seen, then, may provide a basis for exploring speaking up and the image of self.

The threads of possible themes are drawn together, then, in these larger themes of speaking up: bodily experience, the image of self, interpersonal experience and, running through each of these, the tension between possibility and risk. These themes will be explored in the following chapters. The bodily experience of speaking up is addressed in Chapter Five, The Speaking Body. The phenomenology of being seen provides a way, in Chapter Six, of considering the implications of speaking up for the image of self. Chapter Seven explores the interpersonal implications of speaking up by contrasting the relations of speaking up with a reciprocal relation which I have called speaking-with.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Speaking Body

> In our logocentric, patriarchal society, the body is not appreciatively understood, and often not authentically experienced, as an organ of visionary being...And yet, because the body we live and experience is historical, it can tell us, sometimes very precisely and with the utmost specificity, just what it is we need from, or need to see changed in, the present lived moment of our historical situation." (Levin, 1988, p. 318)

Seconds before, Gwendolyn sat relaxed and smiling in the straight office chair but now, as she recounts an incident of speaking up three, perhaps four years past, her body punctuates her speech; she sits tensely upright at the front of her chair, her eyes flash, her hands gesture with firm, angry emphasis. "I was very annoyed," she states. She describes a situation in which she feels her daughter is unfairly disciplined by her high school teachers and, in the telling, words, voice and gestures track the path of her emotions from annoyance through anger, nervousness, to tears. "I think I was getting a little hot under the collar," she explains. "I was getting very upset and emotional. ... I think I was feeling nervous about having made the decision to speak up. ...I think I cried at that point." And then, after she leaves the principal's office,

> I felt very shaky. I went out of there, I recall, feeling just sort of nervous and on edge and my knees were knocking and I was feeling really like I'd been through an emotional wringer. ...I recall being mad at myself afterwards.

The stories of speaking up are conveyed with emotion: in voices trembling with anger and eyes brimming with tears; pages peppered with exclamation marks and capitalized words. Anger is present in the actions and words: "I stomped into the office," Brenda writes, and we can almost see the indignation of her movement. Kirsten turns to a boy who is being taunted and exclaims, "And you take that shirt off! You don't need to wear that and you don't need to listen to them!" and condemns the tormentors as, "Creeps!" "I got mad--furious is the word," Lucille writes. There is most often anger in speaking up, but there are other emotions as well. Marilyn describes graphically her feelings of mounting tension as she anticipates a visit to her mother, the pounding heart and even nausea during their telephone conversation, then the "wave of utter relief and confidence" which she feels after hearing her mother's response. Natalie mentions the "numbness, the relief of having that off my chest," which follows her speaking up.

It seems that emotion is always a part of speaking up, in fact, it is so much a part of the incident that we experience it even as we tell of our speaking days, or even years, later. It appears, too, that there is a path that emotion tends to follow, beginning with the spark that releases our anger, the circumstance which some women describe as absolutely the last straw.

The Last Straw

> I thought, enough is enough. No one has to do anything they don't want, let alone serve 30 drunk men drinks for an evening. So I went to talk to our personnel person.
> (Carmen, written account)

There is a time when silence is possible, and a point at which it is not longer an option. We have simply had enough, and must speak up. Angeline writes,

> I was frustrated by the mom's behavior, but this was the last straw. On the night when I decided it was time to talk to mom, I was furious with A because she had taken someone's clothing and she was taken to the principal by me. I was more upset than Brittany was. I was also upset because I felt my boss should have taken the responsibility to talk to Brittany's mom but as usual my boss left me holding the bag.
> (Angeline, written account)

Gwendolyn talks of "the spark that set me off," and her metaphor of explosion seems apt: that which appeared quiet and harmless has suddenly erupted. Of course, the unruffled surface may also have been deceptive, a cover for turmoil building beneath. "I'm listening to her and just watching and I'm feeling myself getting angrier and angrier," Emily recalls. Terry refers to an accumulation of grievances that may precede speaking up:

> There was a lot of resentment felt towards this man from the whole department and it had been building up for a long time. When I got mad, all of the resentments that I felt towards this man started to pour out of my mouth.
> (Terry, written account)

The tension that has been building within may suddenly erupt as outrage or indignation. I am painfully reminded of this in my teaching when, after trying for several sessions to ignore a small group of students chatting among themselves during a class discussion, I erupt one day with a sarcastic remark that is only thinly veiled in humour. After class I am appalled by what I have done, and the next week I apologize to the class for my action. We agree that I should have said something earlier, before the anger had a chance to accumulate. As Nadia writes in her journal after this discussion, "If I let feelings build up inside and don't express them, when I do say something it often doesn't come out right."

The Body Speaks

As witnesses to speaking up, we see the tension in the speakers' bodies, hear the words rushing forth. As speakers, we are caught up in our action, and may recall only bits of our specific body experience at the onset of speaking up, "My stomach felt tight," "My heart was pounding," "My face was flushed."

As the momentum of emotion is released into words, however, our bodies force our awareness. Harriet's story traces the path of speaking up through anger to almost-tears:

> I was so furious, I just started talking--I can't even remember what I said. After I was done, though, and the discussion had moved on to something else, I realized that I felt weak and shaky and sort of tearful, and my face was hot.
> (Harriet, notes from a conversation)

We cannot ignore or disregard a body that compels speech, that behaves in such noticeable ways. And the action, the involvement of our body may exist in stark contrast with our usual experience of it, for often we try to silence our bodies, to forbid them to speak to us. A young ballerina comments, "You have to be able to build up a tolerance for pain. I like to use my theory that I have no toes so they don't hurt." (Edmonton Journal, Oct. 9, 1990) An acquaintance recalls infuriating her father by standing calmly while he is beating her and asking in a bored tone, "Are you done yet? I want to go out to play." Another describes a "freezing" at times when she is verbally attacked, "becoming a stony wall, unseeing, unfeeling." And victims of sexual abuse describe removing themselves from their bodies, "to a safer place" (National Film Board, 1989). In contrast, the flare of anger in speaking up, the formulation of anger into words, and the subsequent release brings us into close touch with our bodily experience.

In speaking up, anger bursts forth, no longer able to be contained. Then, when the fury has been spent, we see what it is that we have been through: hear from our bodies that tension and strain have now been released; see in our minds the scene that we replay again and again. And what is heard, what is seen, may come as a surprise to us and to others.

> It almost seems out of character, you know. I think, "Oh my goodness! Did I really do that? Did I really say exactly what I said in that situation?"

(Gwendolyn, taped conversation)

Gwendolyn's reflections catch very aptly the spirit of surprise, of the unexpected, which seems to be a part of speaking up. Her action is not characteristic for her, and she thinks back on it with a feeling that approaches wonder. Elaine writes that she "totally disagreed with her instructor "and actually stood up and said so." Haley tells of a situation during a bus tour when, "out of the blue and not common to my nature, I stood up, defiant and glaring in my challenge."

"I can't even remember what I said," women often write, and their comments seem to reflect the highly emotional aspect of their speech. Pushed by anger or frustration, the words seem to tumble out unchecked; we are not in a state where we can listen to ourselves, watch the reactions of others, plan our next statement. What will actually be heard as we speak, and what others will see in our action, may come as a surprise to us and to them: "'Excuse me,' I remember saying, 'Going out will wait. We are going to talk. Now.' Actually I surprised myself and her too" (Paulette, written account). A woman may surprise herself when she speaks up, and she may surprise others. Thus Emily notes the astonishment of her brothers and sisters when she confronts her mother. Haley writes, "There was deadly silence and shock from the others as they digested what I had said. No one had dared do this before now."

Christine recalls that while she was speaking up to her employer,

> All that was going through my mind was she is going to fire me, but to my surprise she could not believe what I had just done, because I'm not that type of person.
>
> (Christine, written account)

Our speaking up is a surprise to others, for it may be an action that is out of place, as when a student speaks up to her teacher. It may be out of character, not an action which others would expect of us. And we, too, may see our action as out of character, not something that we would normally do. Once we have spoken up, however, we know that this is something which is possible for us, something that we can do. And, as we have seen in Chapter Four, it is an action which we may repeat in the future.

Perhaps speaking up shows us possibilities for ourselves but, more compellingly, it may alert us to needed change. Levin (1988) writes,

> Crying is not something we 'do'. Crying is the speech of powerlessness, helplessness. ...crying calls for vision, for thought, for understanding; we need to *see* what *it* makes *visible.*" (p. 172)

Anger and crying are closely akin in speaking up. We begin in anger, and we may end in tears, or close to tears. And while Oxford defines anger as extreme or passionate displeasure, it is derived from the Old Norse *angr*, meaning grief. Maybe our passionate displeasure has its roots in a situation which causes us grief--in our life with an insensitive employer, an uncaring parent, an unresponsive teacher. Perhaps what crying makes visible to us, our anger translates to words, so that we might hear. "I know that I had thought about the issue, but I didn't realize how strongly I felt about it until I started to speak and noticed how emotional I was," Angela comments. Buried frustrations may be brought forth in speech, showing not only what could be, but what should be.

Trying to Stay in Control

Speaking up seems to come upon us suddenly. Words burst forth in speaking up, propelled by strong emotion. We are unable to control them or even, in the turmoil of the moment, to hear them clearly. Emotion is given full rein; we seem to have little choice.

We may struggle, though, to stay "in control," to hold back the tears, to think clearly. If we recognize that we are troubled, we may plan our speaking to come at a time when there may be less emotion: "I can't go and talk to him right now because I'd just cry," or "Right now I'm too angry. I'll wait a couple of days until I can be calmer." After Gwendolyn's speaking up with school personnel, she recalls

> Going and getting a coffee and just sort of sitting down by myself and being mad at myself afterwards that I had not been--that I had sort of dissolved into tears at the very end of all this. What I had wanted to do was be very firm and very angry and sort of pin their ears to the wall and I had not been able to do that to my satisfaction. I think I had let them know that I was upset and angry but I wanted to be able to do it in a really forceful, firm way, and not get weak, not dissolve into women's tears so that you're able to be dismissed as sort of an irrational woman. Somehow to be taken seriously, you have to be really, really firm, you have to be really male. You can't be upset in a female sort of way, because that takes away from the validity of your anger. And I was mad at myself that I had let that happen. (taped conversation)

In a second story of speaking up, Gwendolyn tells of a time when she comes closer to her goal of being firm and in control. This, like the previous one, involves a situation where she is speaking for a child in school.

> The discussion...was all over marks, and I realized as she was talking we didn't have the evidence in front of us and I said, "Can I see where you record your marks?" And I think if I had been really upset I wouldn't even have thought to do that. But I was calm enough to look very carefully at all the marks she had recorded for Stephen and noticed that she had two zeros for him, and I asked her why he had zeros on those occasions and I said, I insisted, that she check at the time, and in fact they were errors. They were excused absences. So I think that by being calm, you know, then she realized she had made a mistake and went back and corrected it.
> (Gwendolyn, taped conversation)

Gwendolyn believes that, in this instance, her speaking up was effective because emotion did not stand in the way of clear thought.

If the best way to speak up is calmly and firmly, why do the stories of speaking up ring with fury and outrage? Perhaps there is a clue in Karen's comment that, "If I'd thought about speaking up before I did it, I wouldn't have done it!" Must emotion obliterate thought if speaking up is to occur?

In emotion there is motion, movement. The Oxford Dictionary defines emotion as "a moving out, migration, transference from one place to another"; a moving, stirring, agitation, perturbation (in a physical sense);" "any agitation or disturbance of the mind, feeling, passion;" "a political or social agitation; a tumult, popular disturbance." There is action and power in these meanings, and a suggestion that emotion may be a driving force in bringing about change.

The emotion which triggers speaking up seems to culminate in undeniable, uncontrollable anger--fury, perhaps, or rage. Feminist thinking recognizes the potential for movement which is in these emotions. Mary Daly (1975) writes that rage "is required as a positive creative force, making possible a breakthrough, encountering the blockages of inauthentic structures." Through it, women can "trigger and sustain movement from the experience of nothingness to recognition of participation in being" (p. 43).

Anger seems often to override clear thinking in speaking up, but would we, in fact, come to speaking up without it? Our strong emotion seems to push our will to speak, overriding the risks which are implicit in our action. Ricouer's (1978) comment seems to describe the dynamics of speaking up:

> Only in this way is emotion intelligible: when it unhinges action by a spontaneity perilous for self-mastery; but if the will ought always to guard its integrity against this spontaneity, it is also through emotion that it moves its body, according to the famous formula: "The will moves by desire." (p. 13)

Perhaps, we would like to put aside the tumultuousness of our emotion in the interests of ordering our speech, being more open to the messages of the other, but we may also need emotion to push us past the risk of speaking. If the choice is one of speaking in anger or continuing to live with injustice or abuse, the former option seems to be the one most valued, though not necessarily the one most frequently chosen.

To be strong, to win, you must not show vulnerability, as Sharlene's comment shows, "I started feeling very nervous and anxious and decided it was better to leave it drop because I could feel tears coming to my eyes and I didn't want her to know that she got to me that much." We cry when we are hurt, and the one-spoken-to must not be granted the power to wound us. Is it that anger can serve as a shield, so that we do not leave ourselves open to the other? Perhaps this is what Sherry's comments tell us:

> When I am kind of wondering how people will feel about what I have to say, then I speak in kind of an apologetic way because I am not sure of people's reactions. In this way I do not come across very sure of myself or my issue. After I have spoken in this circumstance, I usually feel kind of turmoiled inside and I worry about maybe I didn't say the right thing or I think that I shouldn't have said anything at all. Another circumstance when I speak up is when I feel very strongly about something and as a result of this I don't really care about what other people think about what I have to say; it is more important for me to get it off my chest and when I speak I am very sure of myself and whatever it is that I am saying. After I have spoken I feel good about myself and I feel a lot better emotionally. I

> think that speaking vehemently is a better way to go than speaking apologetically.
>
> (Sherry, written account)

With a few exceptions, the speaking up which occurs in women's stories shows little opportunity for controlling emotions: it is speaking up that bursts forth, regardless, and usually has its beginnings in anger. At one level, that anger may be seen as strength and may, indeed, provide strength as an impetus for speaking up. On the other hand, the lack of control that is associated with high emotion may trouble us, and we may look for other ways to speak.

What is Said/What is Heard?

Gwendolyn is upset with herself for crying, because she wants to be firm and forceful. Her concerns will be taken seriously then, she believes, and she will not be dismissed as "an irrational woman." Karly notes that her husband, "always interpreted my speaking up as weakness because it always came out with emotion. ...He blamed me. For being emotional." The body speaks with both tears and anger. But what is said, and how is it heard?

What can we find in these statements that Gwendolyn and Karly make? They seem to tell of the value and meaning that we tend to assign to various emotions, and of the way that we link them to gender. When the body speaks through emotion, what we hear is filtered through the expectations of our culture.

"Big boys don't cry," some parents still tell their sons. "Don't be a sissy. Take it like a man." Males have been denied the release of tears, while females are discouraged from showing anger. McConville (1985) writes,

> It's not surprising that we (women) find it difficult to deal with anger. From boyhood males are permitted, even encouraged, to fight their

> corner (often literally). But little girls who fight are seen as heading for deviancy." (p. 95)

"Anger," write Kramarae and Treichler (1985), is "a human emotion whose needed expression has been denied the 'feminine' woman" (p. 51).

Along with the gendered expectations related to anger, there seems to be a valuing of some emotions, a devaluing of others. Like Gwendolyn, many of the women who contribute speaking up stories tell of the distress they felt when they were unable to hold back tears. They would identify with the story that Lee Grant tells in an October 23, 1989 interview in People magazine:

> I remember standing in the unemployment line. ...I was pregnant with Dinah and my stomach was out to here, and these little bureaucrats liked to exert their power and send you to the back of the line. So I started to yell, and some of the people in the line began to join in because they had been mistreated too, and then the supervisor came over and I blew it. I started to cry. I hate that. I wanted to keep that rage, start a revolution. But instead I cried. (p. 107)

Anger thrusts us forward into action, it seems, where tears signify withdrawal and defeat. Anger is active and strong, where tears seem weak and passive.

Anger pushes us into speaking up, even as it stands in the way of our remaining clear and rational. We value the action, but decry the loss of control which we feel. Ours is a culture which values rationality, objectivity, distance, detachment, control. Since Aristotle, we have tended to view knowledge as existing somewhere beyond us, to be viewed from a distance and without our involvement. From this perspective, to become "emotionally involved" stands in the way of knowing, of "rightness," so words that are said with emotion are suspect and lack credibility. In our pursuit of detachment and distance, we may be embarrassed by emotion or, perhaps even threatened; to display emotion may be to reveal too much.

There are gender associations, too, with regard to reason and control and distance. Perhaps we might also trace these to Aristotle, who suggests that in reproduction, "the body is from the female, it is the soul that is from the male, for the soul is the substance of the particular body" (Barnes, 1984, p. 1146) and that "the rule of the soul over the body, and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate is natural and expedient, whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful" (McKeon, p. 1132). Levin (1988) writes that the association of the male with the rational and the female with passion, or of the male with the mind and the female with the body, is only a part of a system of dualisms which is used to differentiate men and women and establish their places in the culture. He lists other gender-based oppositions such as activity/passivity, sky/earth, ego/libido, order/disorder, maturity/immaturity, clarity/obscurity, light/dark, culture/nature, spirit/matter, forms of consciousness/mysteries of the unconscious, making of history/fate. "Since men have occupied the dominant positions in these bipolar structures," Levin concludes, "the institutionalization of the dualisms has functioned to subordinate and exploit women" (p. 282). We see a small part of this dynamic if we consider the Renaissance belief that the uterus caused women to be more prone to hysteria and to violent feelings of hate, anger, vengeance and fear (Sydie, 1987, p. 3), along with Maclean's (1980) comment that women's frailties and emotional weaknesses were used as "natural justification for their exclusion from public life, responsibility and moral fulfilment" (pp. 43-4).

The association of males with reason and females with bodily functions extends into expectations of men that they will be unemotional, level-headed and all-knowing, and of women that they will be emotional, intuitive and indecisive. Males are to be ruled by reason, and females by passion. Passion, however, is suspect because it cannot be controlled. Women's unrestrained impulses have long been associated with evil, as we see in the stories of Eve and Pandora. "If passive, woman is good, if active, evil," Lott summarizes. (1981, p. 12)

Perhaps one way of restraining female passion is to caste women in a position of preoccupation with bodily presentation, for passion does not always present attractively. Freedman (1986) is one of many who write that the acculturation of females places a great deal of emphasis upon physical appearance. Advertisers have found it lucrative to play upon our insecurities about being loved, being accepted, so that we spend inordinate amounts of time and money trying to make ourselves presentable and attractive to others (Killbourne, 1987). One researcher who analyzed magazine ads aimed at adolescent girls concludes that they are bombarded with the message that their purpose in life is "learning the art of body adornment through clothing, cosmetics, jewelry, hair products, perfumes" (Umiker-Sebok, 1981, p. 226). Kizer (Quoted in Lott, 1981) writes,

> Our masks, always in peril of smearing or
> cracking,
> In need of continuous check in the mirror or
> silverware,
> Keep us in thrall to ourselves, concerned with our
> surfaces
>
> ...So primp. preen, pluck and prize your flesh
> All posturing! All ravishment! All sensibility!
> Meanwhile, have you used your mind today?
> (p. 279)

Our relationship with our bodies becomes an uneasy one in which we are always striving for control; the shape and size of our bodies, the arrangement of hair and face and clothes must be within our command (Freedman, 1986). We distrust the freedom of an unrestrained and unadorned body. If the body is to be viewed with suspicion, and brought into submission, its unregulated expression in the emotion of speaking up might well be alarming to us as well as to others.

What is it that is heard when we speak up? We show a depth of emotion that is manifest in anger and, often and later, in tears. What is heard, however, when filtered through the gender-related expectations of our culture, may be irrationality, weakness, "woman's tears," and speech which is not to be taken seriously. What may also be heard is speech which jeopardizes the status quo for, as Scheman points out, when women discover and express their anger, "emotions become much more threatening than they would be were they simply inner states" (In Levin, 1988, p. 300). Here is a risk of speaking up, then, for will those to whom we speak listen past the labels of the culture to hear what we are saying?

CHAPTER SIX

Showing One's Self Through Speech

> I jumped up and started talking, and I did notice that everyone turned to look at me. At first it didn't really bother me because I was so wrapped up in what I was saying--so angry--but as I talked a bit more, I started to feel self-conscious. I started to stammer and to repeat myself and finally I just finished up quickly and sat down. I guess I was feeling embarrassed at that point.
> (Erika, written account)

Our body shows us the possibilities of speaking up and the conditions which necessitate our action. It seems, though, that this is just a part of what is seen when we speak, and that we are not the only ones who see. When we speak up we step forward, metaphorically or even literally, to where others can see us and hear us. We expose ourselves to their gaze: to the judgements of others and, ultimately, to our own.

Our speaking up cannot, in fact, occur without others to hear. If we only speak, we [illegible] indeed, "make articulate verbal utterances in an ordinary (not singing) voice" (Allen, 1990) and we alone might hear. When we speak up, however, we speak to someone, and about something. The other is an essential part of our action. What is the nature, then, of this relationship with the other in speaking up, and what does it show us of ourselves?

Maria writes in her journal,

> I was a bit scared because I had to talk about myself and expose part of what I am to others. Uneasy too because in these situations, where I don't have control, I tend to forget some of the points that might be important (I should start writing them down), I might even stutter or become very much aware of my accent, way of talking, pitch of voice. (Maria, journal)

Maria is commenting on an assignment she is doing in class, one where she is telling about herself and showing items that represent her life. Her words capture the fears, the risks, of being centre stage; of being exposed physically, emotionally, and intellectually, and of trying to retain some control over what is shown.

As we see in Maria's words, we become very visible when we speak to others, and this is particularly true when we speak up. Speaking up is an act which comes as a surprise: to the speaker but usually, as well, to the audience. It does not fit the expected pattern of speech for particular times and places and relationships so, like a black figure on a field of white, it draws attention. Its air of challenge may be unusual, even shocking, as may the display of emotion which accompanies it. We begin to speak up, and eyes turn toward us, bodies shifting to afford a clearer view--we are at the centre of a kaleidoscope which has just been turned. The normal attentiveness that would be given a speaker is accentuated by our urgency and emotion and the unexpectedness of our action. Now, like Maria, we are centre stage. All eyes are upon us, waiting to see what we will say and do.

Aaron (1986) writes that the actor's experience of appearing in public is characterized by two themes: "exposed" and "alone with a thousand strangers." Our "house" may number somewhat less than a thousand, but there is no doubt of our exposure as we speak. All eyes are upon us, and they see our physical self: a face that may be flushed or twisted with emotion, eyes that are clouded with tears, a body that is less than graceful in the forcefulness of anger.

We are not only exposed physically, but in other ways as well. There are the words that come out of our mouths--issued forth in moments, but enduring and inextricably linked to us in the minds of our listeners for, once spoken, they cannot be recalled or erased. Some of the things we say in words and gesture are planned, perhaps, and controlled. Others may emerge without our permission. Propelled by emotion, our speech may gather momentum and tumble out unrestrained. Or perhaps--and is this even worse?--we may become choked and confused and able only to put forth our message in disjointed fragments. What do we show in our speech? Does it represent us in a way we would have wished?

The stage actor, Aaron (1986) notes, encounters a unique problem of hiding and showing at the same time, and that this is the basis for stage fright, "The actor's conscious fear is not that he will make a mistake but that the audience will see something it is not supposed to see, namely, his fear, his stage fright" (p. 59). When we take centre stage by speaking up, what can we hide, and what will we show? The self that we wish to put forward may be calm or thoughtful or poised or easygoing or articulate or goodnatured, but what is the self that is seen when we make ourselves visible in speech, and when we are enveloped in the emotion of speaking up? This, then, is a risk of speaking up: that in becoming seen, we may show something that we do not wish to show.

Our anger has brought us to speaking up, and now we stand centre stage, all eyes turned toward us. How do we deal with the intensity of eyes fixed inquiringly, expectantly, perhaps incredulously, upon us? Kaplan (1969) writes that the actor experiences three distinct phases of stage fright before and at the beginning of a performance. The first includes flashes of panic, moods of depression, manic agitation, hypochondria, and obsessional fantasies. Nearing performance time, the actor becomes convinced that the audience is present with the intent of humiliating and ridiculing the performer. With the rising of the curtain, Kaplan goes on, there is "a split between a functioning and an observing self" (p. 64) such that the actor may see herself from a distance, performing before a distant audience.

It is possible, but not likely, that we will prepare for speaking up as an actor gets ready for a role. More likely, our anger will smoulder and then erupt, taking us past the anxiety that would precede our performance, though perhaps returning as we re-view what we have done. Kaplan's second and third phases of stage fright, however, speak directly to the power that exists in the gaze of another, power that we will experience when we assume centre stage by speaking up. With the adversarial stance of the second stage there is a distancing of speaker from audience, a phenomena which Aaron (1986) links to the actor's desire to gain "control" or "power" over the audience. Then, in the third phase, there is a further distancing and objectification of the speaker with regard to herself. Sartre (1965) writes that the essence of the relationship of self to other lies in the experience of being seen, and shows how the consciousness of being seen alters our experience of ourselves. The phenomena which Kaplan notes as a part of stage fright becomes understandable as an experience of being seen when we see it from Sartre's perspective. Perhaps the gaze of "a thousand strangers"— accentuates that experience in some ways, but so too, it seems, might the nature of speaking up, where heightened emotion precipitates an unusual action and jeopardizes our sense of control.

It seems that the experience of being seen has a great deal to say about speaking up, and that what it says relates closely to some of the threads which I traced in Chapter Four, threads which tie speaking up to "who I am" and "who I can be."

Being Seen

What does it mean to be seen by others? As my niece combs her hair in preparation for our trip to the mall, I remember my own adolescent preoccupation with a self that existed in the eyes of others:

At twelve, I keep a careful distance--five steps behind my mother--as we walk down Main Street. Beneath my studied nonchalance is the awkward, stiff tension of knowing that every eye is upon me. The women with their babies across the street, the old man on the corner, the clerk standing in the door of the drugstore; I dare not glance at them, but know that they are looking and appraising. I have on new jeans, and my hair is carefully combed. They must be impressed with this stylish young person, confident and independent, striding through town on her own. And then--the agony of it--we pass the crowd of teenagers congregated at the corner. I know that their attention is focused directly on me, and that the looks are appraising and critical. The words and phrases that I overhear can be only about me, and the judgements have to be unfavourable. Cheeks flaming, I march determinedly on, but inside the conviction of style and competence crumbles. The new jeans don't seem right anymore, and the hairstyle is childish. I am convinced that I am the reason for the burst of laughter that erupts behind me, and I slink ashamedly on my way.

Is there anyone who has not experienced the self-consciousness of adolescence? We believe that the eyes of every other have us as their sole concern, and we blossom and shrink with their perceived message. The being of others is acknowledged only in relation to us; that others might have feelings and comments and lives that exclude us is irrelevant, unthinkable. We look at others, and what we see is ourselves.

As a child, I spend long summer days each year at my grandmother's cabin at the lake. It is a busy beach, but there are places to be alone. My favorite is the needle-strewn spot under a large evergreen tree in my grandmother's yard, where branches brush the ground to hide my presence, and the sun filtering through them makes dancing patterns on the bare earth. Here I read, and dream, and occasionally admit my younger brother for games of make-believe. The tree is in the corner of the yard, separated from the bustling street by inches and a wire mesh fence. I am next to the action of the world when I sit under my tree--near enough to reach out and touch the passersby, should I choose to do so. Unless I call out, or leave the protection of my tree, however, they will not see me. Hidden by the low-hanging branches, I can see without being seen. Confident of my anonymity, I can relax under my tree. There is no fear of judgement, no worry about presenting a desirable face. It doesn't matter how I look, how I move, how I am dressed, for here I am unseen.

To feel that we are being seen, to feel that we are hidden: the reality of being seen or hidden seems unimportant in the face of our perceptions. As I walk down the street with my mother, I feel that I am being watched, and my gait stiffens even as I strive to maintain an attitude of careless grace. It makes little difference that others on the street may be oblivious to my presence, for I feel that I am on view, and it is my feeling of being seen that matters. Similarly, while I am under my tree, it is the sensation of being hidden that is important, rather than the fact that I can or cannot be seen. Perhaps I am unaware that the branches on my tree are actually too skimpy to hide me from passersby. As long as I am oblivious to my exposure, I will still be at ease in this favorite place. It is only when I realize I am being seen that everything will change. How terribly embarrassing, then, if others see me in unguarded moments when I play with a younger brother, watch the world, or just dream. What might I show, and what will they think of me? Nevertheless, the fact is that while I walk down the street, I feel that everyone looks at me, and my experience is of being looked at. When I am under my tree, I feel hidden, and I can be in this part of my world in quite another way.

What is the difference that I experience between feeling seen and feeling hidden? When I believe I am concealed under my tree, I am relaxed and at ease, comfortable with the space I inhabit and with myself. Without the sensation of being seen, I do not care about presentation: about how I look to others. I am free to think about, and experience, other things. When I feel seen, however, it is different, for now I wish to be able to orchestrate my actions so as to create the desired impression in these persons who will surely be watching. When I am watched, or think that I am being watched, I become self-conscious, that is, conscious of my self. Every action, every detail of my presentation is brought to awareness when it may be watched by others. It is as if I see myself with a third eye, moving outside of my body to view myself as I will be seen by others. I become the object of my consciousness. As Sartre (1965) explains, my conviction of the other's presence establishes a subject-other relation which shows me to myself as an object.

Not only do I see myself with the distance of a third eye, but I see myself in my place under the tree. Seen through the eyes of a real or imagined other, the cosy, protected space may be cramped and dirty, and somehow pathetic. When I look at myself in the space, I may decide that it is inappropriate and strange that an eleven-year-old should crouch there for hours on end, and I may be ashamed. When I assume the perspective of the watching other, I will judge. My intimate, easy experience of my special place will be shattered with the admission of that third, judgmental eye. The space beneath the tree will become something much different: no longer a refuge but, if it is used at all, a stage from which I present myself to the world.

The conviction of being seen seems to be painfully accentuated in adolescence; years later we may be virtually oblivious to the judgements of others as we walk down the street. Still, we know what it is like to suddenly become aware of being watched, or to think that we are being watched. Now as I sit at the keyboard working on this paper, my typing seems effortless, almost beyond awareness in my concentration on the ideas I am trying to convey. My sister enters the room, and though I try to continue with my work, my concentration leaps briefly from the writing I do to the appearance I present. My sister is an excellent typist, while any speed that I have acquired comes from constant practice rather than accomplished technique. Now I focus upon the movements that my fingers make, and I find them awkward and bumbling. The incident is of little consequence in one way, for if I really think about it, I know that I am comfortable with any judgement my sister might make and that, furthermore, it is unlikely she will even notice. On the other hand, this occurrence is an important reminder that I experience the world, and myself, differently when I am being seen. When I become aware of my sister's presence, I take on a perspective which might be hers, in a relation which Sartre describes as Other-as-subject and myself-as-object. I look at myself from a distance, with a "third eye," and I judge.

Grumet (1983) explains the importance of seeing and being seen in our first recognition of ourselves as separate people.

> When the infant first recognizes herself in a mirror, she receives information about herself that she has never had before, information that she may never have received at all without the reflecting agent outside her own body. The one that the infant discovers in a mirror, in her parents' eyes, is, as Lacan (1968) maintains, an identity that is alienated at the moment it is claimed, for the visual image of the body is mediated through the other and radically

> undermines the earlier sense of connection to others. (p. 48)

Our sense of self comes with the understanding that we can be seen by others in a way that we cannot see ourselves. In the process, however, we acquire the alienating perspective of "the third eye," through which we look at ourselves as others might see us.

At the beginning of this chapter, Erika told of a speaking up experience in which, at first, she is almost oblivious to the gazes of others. As her anger abates, however, she becomes more and more conscious of her exposure, begins to stumble in her speech, then sits down in embarrassment. With the admission of the Other, it seems that Erika begins to see herself as others might; that is, she becomes an object to herself. In her self-consciousness, she is unable to continue her speech.

We may experience the gaze of others as detrimental to our speech, but we may also find in it an affirmation of our actions. Joanne concludes her story of speaking up to her instructor with these words:

> Then I realized that most of the class were listening AND AGREEING with me. I had never been the type to speak out in front of a group before and I really haven't much since, but I remember how good it felt.
>
> (Joanne, written account)

The agreement or approval of those who witness speaking up may say, "You are doing the right thing," or "I admire you for what you are doing."

Several women mention the reverse experience, telling of their disappointment with the lack of support which they receive from those whom they feel should share their perspective.

> After the meeting, the other women gathered around to say how glad they were that I'd spoken. I felt really pissed off because they had all been there longer than I had--they hadn't said anything

> themselves but were perfectly willing to have me stick my neck out!
> (Maureen, notes from a conversation)

Cindy writes that when she speaks up to tour directors who have mistreated her group's possessions,

> There was deadly silence and shock from the others as they digested what I had said. No one had dared do this before now. Later I heard the bravos from the girls but I had felt sad. It was a turning point in our team relationship after that moment.
> (Cindy, written account)

If we see ourselves in the gazes of others, an approving look might be particularly important when we are engaged in an action that is new to us, and risky.

We sit quietly, anonymously, but when we speak, others turn to look at us. Before, we were hidden in the crowd, but now we are exposed. We can be seen by others, and we can see ourselves differently.

Seeing Ourselves

Being seen allows us to see ourselves. While we are caught up in the anger that propels us into speaking, there may, in fact, be little room to admit the objective third eye. We are intent upon what we are doing and saying, and less concerned than usual with the eyes of onlookers. With the waning of anger, however, we once again see ourselves as others might. In fact, we may replay the scene of our speaking up again and again in our minds to look again and evaluate what has happened. What did I really say? What did I do? What will the others have seen? What will they think?

It seems that the action of speaking up may show us to ourselves, and tell us something about who we are and what is possible for us. We have seen that speaking up may catch us unawares, alerting us to frustrations we did not know were accumulating. "If I'd thought about speaking up before

I did it, I wouldn't have done it," says Karen. Suddenly we find ourselves on our feet and speaking passionately, emphatically, in a way that surprises others and ourselves. Perhaps our action tells us of the importance a topic holds for us. "I know that I had thought about the issue, but I didn't realized how strongly I felt about it until I started to speak and noticed how emotional I was," Angela comments. The surprise we upon discovering our investment in the topic is accompanied by surprise at ourselves. "It almost seems out of character, you know," Gwendolyn reflects, "I think, 'Oh my goodness! Did I really do that?'" Her comment is echoed in other words by many of the women, for what is usually shown is a perception of speaking up as out-of-character. The reflections of some of the women, in fact, trace possible reasons for this:

> (Speaking up) was not something that was a part of my upbringing, in any sense, either in a family experience or in a school experience. It was just never anything that people expected me to do, so I never got any practice doing it.
> (Gwendolyn, taped conversation)

In the view of speaking up as an unusual or, less-frequently, a usual, action for a particular woman is a description of self which is couched in terms of speech:

> I am a quiet person, and something has to be really important to me in order for me to speak up.
> (Ruth, written account)

> I had never been the type to speak out in front of a group before.
> (Joanne, written account)

> I was not a non-speaking person.
> (Kirsten, written account)

> I'm not that type of person.
> (Christine, written account)

This tie between self and speech is reflected in the Belenky et al. (1986) work, Women's Ways of Knowing, where researchers found that women repeatedly used metaphors of voice to describe themselves. The connection was so strong that the researchers chose to use metaphors of voice and silence to describe women's epistemological development.

What are the implications of a view of speaking up as closely tied with the image of self but often occurring unexpectedly, taking us by surprise? If we ever feel that we truly know ourselves, that knowledge must be challenged when, seeing ourselves as "non-speaking," we speak up. The "Did I really say that?" becomes a new look at ourselves. Our expectations for ourselves are challenged, or we become aware of a possibility that we didn't see before. A surprise to us then, for who is this woman who speaks so loudly and defiantly? If she can do this, what else can she, or will she, do? Speaking up may show us to ourselves in a new way, one that is filled with possibilities. And among the possibilities is the opportunity to show ourselves and others who we are, and what we are able to do.

The "I Am" and the "I Can" in Speaking Up

We can see the possibilities for the "I can" in speaking up if we look back to my eleven-year old self, secure in my haven beneath the tree. I feel that I am hidden while I am in my space. I might sometimes wish I could stay under my tree forever, but I will not, for the world calls. Even my watching is a reaching out, for as Langeveld points out, "the child who spies on others still maintains a relationship with these others" (1983, p. 12). The older girls sharing secrets of the sidewalk, the teenagers racing raucously by in cars--these are things to which I aspire. As I lurk unseen, I watch, and weigh, and plan. Soon I will venture forth into the challenge of being seen.

But why? Why leave the safety of this hidden place to be exposed to others and, through them, to the appraisal of the third eye? It seems strange, until we consider what I do in my secret place. For even my reading, my dreaming and my watching connect me with the world outside, and anticipate my place within it. They present me with possibilities: "This is the way that you could be." "This is something that you could do." Anything seems feasible in the privacy of my hidden place. However, it is only when I step outside of my place into the eye of the Other that possibilities can be tested and evaluated. While I am unseen, I may be a brave hero who fights injustice. It is only when I venture onto the playground and stand up for a child who is being cruelly treated that the possibility becomes a reality, a part of my identity. I learn what I can do only when I show myself, when I venture into the world outside.

We need others to show us who we are. If we remain unseen, we will be safe, but we will never know who we are, and what we might achieve. We watch from our hidden place, and see the possibilities beyond. We emerge from hiding ready to meet the world, with all of its risks and its rewards.

The stories of speaking up tell of just such a choice--to venture forth from a place of safety, into the unknown. Consider, for example, the story of Laurel, a high school student who breaks the traditional rules of the student-teacher relation in an angry confrontation with her teacher.

> A time when I spoke up was when I was in grade ten. I had been away from school for a few days due to illness. I was trying to do my homework so that I would be caught up in all my classes. I was caught up in all my work except for Math. The teacher told me to come in and see him after school, so he could give me the instruction I had missed. I would go to talk with him, the teacher would be busy. After a week of this, the teacher announced to the class that there would be an end

> of the unit test in two days. After the class, I went up to the teacher and asked him to help me with my missed homework. He said, "Sorry, Laurel, not today. Come in tomorrow morning before school." The next morning I went to school. When I arrived at his room, the teacher was already with another student. He said to me, "Sorry, Laurel. Can you come at lunch time?" Well, by this time my temper was starting to get to me, but I agreed to come back at lunch. When I arrived at lunch time the teacher had forgotten about a meeting, and he would not be at the school until afternoon the day of the test. Well, the day of the test came and I was very nervous and upset with the whole situation. The teacher said to me, "Laurel, just do the questions you can." The next day when the tests were handed back, on the top of my test paper was written, "You should have come and talked to me when you are having problems understanding the work." I did not say a word about this during class, but after class I walked up to the teacher and said, "Why did you write that note on my paper? You knew I wasn't here and didn't get the notes or instructional time." The teacher said, "Well, Laurel, when you're away you should come and see me." I replied, "Listen, every time I would come and ask for help you were always busy." The teacher got an amazed look on his face and apologized.
>
> (Laurel, written account)

We look at Laurel's story from our perspective as adults and think, "But who wouldn't have spoken, after such provocation! How would it be possible to remain silent?" But if we return to our grade ten selves, even those of us who were the most rebellious will recognize the risk that is in Laurel's decision to speak. To "talk back" to teachers is not acceptable behavior, we have learned, and we know that teachers have considerable, real influence over aspects of our school success. Laurel's anger overrides any fear of repercussion, however, and she speaks. But what has she to gain by speaking? Perhaps the teacher will help her with her work now, and that would be a pleasant change. Possibly the mark that he has recorded will be altered. There is a sense, though, that these changes would be secondary to another, more basic, one. What Laurel asks in her speaking up with her teacher is that he revise his perception of her as a student that does not come for help, one who doesn't care, perhaps, or expects to get by without work. She demands that she be viewed by the teacher in a different way. There is possibility for change, then, in Laurel's speaking; in the teacher's accessibility, in her grades, and, most fundamentally, in the judgement which the teacher makes of Laurel as a student and as a person.

We have seen that the potential for change runs through the stories of speaking up. Brenda find that she is underpaid, in comparison with the male staff, and asks for a more equitable salary. When her instructor's statements contradict her own practical knowledge, Elaine argues of her position and, implicitly, for a change in the instructor's ideas. Kirsten, whose story follows, demands that her classmates behave differently, and that their victim stop putting up with their abuse. The possibility of bringing about change seems implicit in the action of speaking up.

Bringing about Change for Others

Speaking for someone else, whether a child, a timid co-worker, or an absent relative, is a recurring theme in women's stories of speaking up. In Chapter Three, we saw Kirsten's description of a situation where she takes immediate action to remedy a situation in which a classmate is being tormented by peers.

> I immediately went up and just lit into them. I wasn't abusive, just very direct. I asked them what they thought they were doing, who did they think they were. "He has as much value as you do."... Then I turned to him and said, "And take that shirt off! You don't need to wear that and you don't need to listen to them!"
> (Kirsten, taped conversation)

Her words carry authority, the aggressors back down, and she delivers a message to the victim, John, that he should behave differently in such situations. In a similar story, first presented in Chapter Four, we see Jana coming to the assistance of her falsely accused younger brother.

> When I was about ten years old and my younger brother, Matthew, was six, there was an incident when my parents blamed Matthew for something he didn't do. But since he was labelled and usually he was the troublemaker, they automatically thought it was him. But really it was me! So I spoke up--they were in shock. I don't remember what the incident was about, but I do remember sticking up for Matthew.
>
> (Jana, written account)

When Jana speaks up for her brother, her act seems to reflect an assumption that he needs her help and that she is able to accomplish something for him that he cannot do for himself, for certainly she is the one, rather than he, who is likely to be believed in this situation. Her action, like Kirsten's, seems to be based in a conviction of right and propelled by indignation regarding the injustice that is being perpetrated. And, just as Kirsten has, Jana has cast herself in a particular relation to the person for whom she speaks, as the one who is capable of bringing about change on behalf of another. In fact, her action seems to reflect a belief that she is more able to create this change than the other would be. She is the one who should speak, because she has the nerve, perhaps, or the unconcern for consequences, or the ability to present the case so that it will be heard.

In speaking for someone else, Jana, Kirsten, and the others speak both about their relation to that person and their view of themselves. For if the other is less able, they are more able. Their action is both a result and a confirmation of their ability and competence. They are able, and respond and, in so doing, become response-able, casting themselves in a position of responsibility. According to Webster, responsibility may imply accountability or obligation. Certainly, once we choose to speak for another, we become answerable to the consequences of the action. If we succeed in accomplishing a goal which we, hopefully, share with the person we are helping, we are vindicated in our intervention. If we fail, our efforts may or may not be appreciated. In our willingness to risk failure, we again affirm our perception of ourselves as able. (There is, of course, the matter of the responseability of the persons for whom we speak. If we had not spoken, would they, perhaps, have done so for themselves? In taking responsibility, are we depriving them of their opportunity to respond?)

Sometimes our responsibility is formally cast in role expectations and the intricacies of relationships. When Gwendolyn speaks up for her daughter, she reflects that, "I really didn't have a choice." It is a mother's "job" to speak up for her child. Perhaps in the relation of parent to child, teacher to student, employer to employee it is almost obligatory to speak for that person in certain situations. We hold a formalized power in some positions that assumes we are more able to speak and be heard.

As a part of speaking for someone else, we may speak in order to deliver an indirect message to a person other than the one-spoken-to. For example, Gwendolyn measures the success of her speaking up partly in terms of what her act says to her daughter. The school administration did not respond to her concern but, she reflects,

> I think maybe the only good thing, the only good result I can see out of it...was that she (her daughter) knew I went and made a fuss. ...She knew that I accepted her side of the whole incident, and agree with it, and felt that the adults in charge had acted very inappropriately, and I was prepared to make a noise about that kind of behavior.
>
> (Gwendolyn, taped conversation)

By speaking up for another person, we may send them a message that we care for them, that we believe them, that we are prepared to risk ourselves for them.

We may also believe that we are providing a model to others through our speaking up. Donna is pleased that her assertiveness in returning a piece of defective merchandise provides a positive example for her children, "I hope that they'll see this and know that they could do the same kind of thing." Perhaps marking a path for others to follow is the ultimate expression of ourselves as capable and worthwhile persons, for we are casting ourselves as worthy of emulation.

There is an "I can" in speaking up for someone else, then, and through it, an "I am": "I can create change for other people," and "I am a person who changes things for other people." Emily's comment reflects the sense of personal power that may lie in successfully bringing about change through speaking up.

> I couldn't believe it, and I immediately thought, "That was all my doing because I said that and I challenged the way she was looking at it and her not appreciating the other sides of the situation." So I felt I was, you know, the saviour of the situation. I made my mother reconsider something for the first time in her life.
>
> (Emily, taped conversation)

Even in a failed effort at speaking up, a situation where there is no change, it seems like there may be value, nonetheless, in the effort. "I don't know if I accomplished anything," Joanne reflects, "but at least I tried."

When women speak up for themselves, to bring about a desired end or to defend themselves, the action appears to relate even more directly to "who I am" and "what I can do." As we have noted in Chapter Four, however, this is an action which may also be more difficult than speaking for someone else.

Bringing about Change for Ourselves

In a presentation entitled "Lighten Up" Sandy Queen (1988) encourages her audience to request the appreciation they need by asking for a standing ovation. There are two rules: the first is that a person must ask decisively, and the second is that they must ask for themselves. "People say," she notes, "that it would be much easier if we could ask for someone else, 'This fellow sure looks like he could use a standing ovation.'" Such a statement is against the rules, however, for it involves taking the easy way out. It is much more difficult, she believes, to ask for something for ourselves.

Certainly, we value the act of speaking up for others. I was reminded of this one evening when I mentioned to a group of students that I felt a little embarrassed having made a scene when an elderly woman was ignored by the staff at a deli counter. They responded that I shouldn't feel that way because, after all, I was helping someone else. It wasn't as if I were just acting for my own benefit.

Perhaps females, more than males, are encouraged to speak for others rather than for themselves. Gilligan (1982, 1988, 1989) writes that females develop in an ethics of care, and that we are taught to be selfless, rather than selfish. In this conception, speaking up for others becomes an expected female activity, while to speak for ourselves violates a cultural prescription of selflessness, where we are expected to put others' needs above our own. Paulette's comment seems to follow directly from this position.

> It is hard for me to remember a time when I did speak up for myself. My theory was to take the blame for everyone--then the argument would be over and we could all get back to living. This is how most of my life went. As long as everyone was happy it was not a problem for me.
>
> (Paulette, written account)

Speaking up for oneself, therefore, may be a much different act, a more difficult act, than speaking for someone else, for there is no justification in the needs of others. Gwendolyn recognizes a difference between the two experiences of speaking up in her comment, noted in Chapter Four, that "I find it very hard to speak up--I don't know if I ever have--just for myself. So that's almost not speaking up."

Most of the stories of speaking up do tell of speaking for someone else. A few, however, like Jamilla's and Ruth's stories in Chapter Four, describe instances that seem primarily to reflect speaking for oneself. The act of speaking up in defense of self is illustrated compellingly in Karly's story, outlined earlier. On the edge of dissolving a ten year marriage, Karly finally challenges her in-law's view of her and her marriage. Her speaking up comes at what is already a turning point for Karly. She realizes that her way of dealing with the world is no longer working, and that she is alone. As she told her in-laws that day, "I cannot depend on my husband, I can't depend on my father. ...I could provide a stable home for the children more effectively by myself." She speaks up to defend her self, as a person who has become disenchanted with a particular way of being and is beginning to change her life. From a theoretical perspective, one might see in her words the reflection of the "failed male authority" which Belenky et al. (1986) find is frequently a part of the move from an external "received" to an internal "subjective" knowing.

Often, it seems, the change that we hope to bring about by speaking up has benefits for others. Even then, however, our action has benefit for ourselves. Nadia writes in her journal,

> This was a bad week for me. Not much happened that was good. But today at day care one of the girls came to talk to me about some problems she was having at home. We talked for a long time,

> and I tried to listen closely and to reassure her that her parents cared about her and that's why they were acting the way they are. She felt better after our talk. She was smiling and playing with the other kids, and I felt better too.
>
> (Nadia, journal entry)

Nadia's is not a speaking up story, but it illustrates a connection which my students frequently describe in their self-esteem journals, which is that in attempting to help someone else, we also build our own confidence and sense of worth.

I suggested earlier that when Jana speaks up for a brother who is being unjustly blamed, she affirms her view of herself as one who has power, that is, as one who is able to bring about change. There is an "I can" in her action that tells about who she is and who she wishes to be. When we speak up for ourselves, our statement may be an "I can" but also an affirmation of ourselves as persons worth speaking for. We matter, so we will make the effort.

Seeing Women

> Girl-watching is a prime example of female objectification. Televised beauty contests legitimize the sport as a form of recreation, like bridge or bowling. We even have special words like ogling and leering, used specifically to describe the activity of males staring at females. Girl-watching and street harassment are found in virtually every Western culture. Unwritten custom invites males to inspect, admire or humiliate females who pass by, freely offering judgment through shrill whistles, threatening stares, or animal sounds, the equivalent of a verbal pat on the rear. Secretaries and saleswomen who crowd city streets at noon are all fair game. Many are also active participants. Carefully groomed for the public arena, they peer from behind powdered lids, hoping to be acknowledged. Women react in different ways to street hassling. Some say they thrive on it as genuine praise. Some pretend not to notice. None can fully ignore it. Most experience a mixture of pride, fear, anger and embarrassment. They walk on feeling flattered, insulted, confused, sensing that the underlying

> judgement was not simply toward the body. A mere whistle inserts a wedge between mind and body, reducing a person to an object. Street hassling is generally not intended to make women feel good about themselves but to make them uneasy. Those males who hassle are not motivated simply to compliment, but to assert their right to judge a woman, to invade her awareness, to make her self-conscious, to force her to see herself as an object in their eyes. Girl-watching and street hassling perpetuate the belief that female appearance is public property and that female objectification is legitimate. (Freedman, 1986, p. 38)

As women, we become very accustomed to seeing ourselves through the eyes of others. Most of us are socialized from an early age to present a pleasing appearance, and advertising and the media strongly reinforce this message. Freedman suggests, however, that constantly being "on display," encouraged to become "decorative objects," may have the effect of making us overly reliant upon others as our source of information about who we are, thus losing our selves in their opinions. She observes that,

> Objectification changes body image and erodes self-esteem. To be objectified means to be seen as a thing that exists for the viewer. As object rather than subject, a woman suffers a kind of "psychic annihilation." As object, her existence depends on the observer, who can either bring her to life by recognizing her or snuff her out by ignoring her. (p. 37)

If speaking out is a statement of self, an "I can" and an "I matter," it stands in direct opposition to the dehumanizing effects of objectification. However, in a culture where women are acutely conscious of being watched and judged, where "What will people think?" assumes prime importance, the risk and difficulty of exposing oneself through speaking up may, it would seem, be overwhelming.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Speaking Up/Speaking With

"Their conversation," Toni Morrison writes,

> Is like a gently wicked dance; sound meets sound, curtsies, shimmies, and retires. Another sound enters but is upstaged by still another: the two circle each other and stop. Sometimes their words move in lofty spirals: other times they take strident leaps, and all of it is punctuated with warm-pulsed laughter--like the throb of a heart made of jelly. The edge, the curl, the thrust of their emotions is always clear to Freida and me. We do not, cannot, know the meanings of all their words, for we are nine- and ten-years-old. So we watch their faces, their hands, their feet, and listen for truth in timbre. (1970, p. 16)

I find Morrison's passage first as a quote in a book written by another woman, and I treasure its elegant imagery. Unhampered by context, I frame the two friends against flickering firelight, their bodies, like their words, moving in graceful, unhurried rhythm with each other. Leaning intently forward, settling comfortably back. Heads tossing and shoulders trembling with laughter. Undoubtedly the hands, which I cannot see clearly, are moving effortlessly, efficiently through the shelling of peas, the mending of socks. The unhurried everyday-ness of their being together is mirrored in these repetitive, never-ending tasks. Their conversation winds tranquilly through the hours, even though its moments pulse with energy. Old friends, they are delicately, infinitely, tuned to one another.

The evocativeness of Morrison's words carries me into the picture she creates, and it is I who is sitting with a friend, with a sister, with my daughter. Perhaps we are at a corner table in a favourite restaurant, relaxed and content. The sun filters through leafy green plants to dance on the tablecloth. There is no need to hurry. Our conversation does not flow, but darts and twines: pull up this thread from days past, we have worked with it before, but now weave it in here, and add this one. The pattern we create is everchanging, the form of our dialogue amorphous. The words we share, the ideas we explore, are not intended to create a whole, but simply to join the larger, unwieldy pieces of our individual lives loosely but strongly to one another.

The rhythm of conversation is graceful bodies lost to music, or deft hands giving colour and form to fabric. Words play off of others: advancing, retreating, circling, sometimes cavorting and bounding. Voices are soft and whispery, now warm and full, now exploding in laughter. Hands give silent emphasis to the words we speak. Gossamer-fine but strong, words embellish and join. The to and fro of conversation unites us in a shared enterprise. Now you talk, and I listen; then your turn to hear and mine to speak. Our physical being connects us across and through our words; eyes are attentive and accepting, hands reach out to touch lightly and reassuringly, bodies are infused with the warmth of being together. We listen care-fully to each other, free of the need to convince or impress, open. The words that we exchange help to complete and cement our understanding.

Speaking up, though, is far from this warm and caring exchange. "I stepped down quickly and went to war," Emily declares, and her statement evokes the excitement and danger of a purposeful advance, the flags and drums of anticipated conquest. She moves down from the table where she has been sitting so that she can confront her mother from a standing position, "I remember that I felt very tall." Her battle is short: a pointed statement delivered with a glare, and a dramatic exit. Then, later, after the release of tears, there is the sweetness of learning that she has achieved victory.

The stark thrust of speaking up exists in jolting contrast to the consonance of conversation: a crashing, discordant solo following a harmonious duet. Rhythm, says Webster, is "movement characterized by equal or regularly alternating beats." Where, in speaking up, are the to and fro, the rise and fall; the voices advancing, mingling, withdrawing, returning; or the bodies leaning toward, away, then together?

Where the words of conversation may circle and hover, the words of speaking up are hurled with force and direction. Freed of their restraints, they rush out to crowd impatiently and imposingly into the space between us and an other person. The voices of conversation rise and fall and intertwine with one another, but in speaking up only one voice is heard, and it is harsh and angry, pushing against the other. "How dare you?" Gwendolyn exclaims, and the young man to whom she speaks, "backed away a little bit and didn't really say an awful lot after that." Speaking up leaves little room for the words, the voice, the physical being of the one-spoken-to.

There is rhythm in the back and forthness of conversation: now your turn to speak, now my turn to listen. Now my turn to speak, now your turn to listen. We create the regular, alternating beats. Is it possible to find that rhythm in speaking up?

> I'm sitting on the table...and my mother is just displaying this anger about what has happened. You know, "Silly, how stupid, you don't play around with cars etcetera etcetera." And I'm listening to her and watching and I'm just feeling myself getting angrier and angrier, and my whole sense is, "You weren't at the hospital. You didn't see her. You didn't see her lying there asleep and how vulnerable she looked." And so I'm not saying anything and then finally she says, "I'm certainly not going to see her in the hospital." As if her punishment for doing this is that mother will withdraw. And I just remember moving from the table and standing up and looking

> at her and saying, "Mother, some people understand with their heads and others with their hearts." Which sounded so profound to me. I can remember the people in the room, whoever they were, just looking at me. But of course, in a very typical response, I just glared at her, and then left the room. Very dramatic. Then the next thing that I remember is being at the hospital and on her bedside is some flowers...and Mother has been to the hospital to see her! I couldn't believe it, and I immediately thought, "That was all my doing because I said that and I challenged the way she was looking at it and her not appreciating the other sides of the situation. ...I felt heard. Really heard.
>
> (Emily, taped conversation)

Earlier, we heard Emily describe her speaking up as "going to war." We found her sitting on the table, perhaps already beginning her move into a confrontational stance since she notes elsewhere that her position was "unusual because we children weren't allowed to sit on the table." We saw her delivering a clear, pointed message, and executing an effective retreat. She was definitely the solitary actor in that sequence, while the others who were there, her mother and, she notes, probably some brothers and sisters, existed only as her audience. The second, enlarged picture of her speaking up, however, challenges the view through this first narrow lens. For when we encounter Emily, she is sitting on the table, but she is listening to her mother. Her mother is speaking, and it is the content of this speech which invokes Emily's reaction. She feels herself growing angrier and angrier, and finally she speaks. Her mother speaks and Emily listens, Emily speaks, and...the beats could continue into a rhythm. Emily cannot recall her mother's response, although she recreates what she believes would have happened.

> My sense is that she is still moving until she hears my first couple of words and then she does stop and turn. My fantasy of her, how she is standing, is her hand in the sink and like this (hand on hip) and she kind of turns to me like

> this to hear what I am saying.... I don't think she responded to me. I would say that she said nothing after that.

In fact, however, Emily leaves very little opportunity for her mother to respond because "I just *glared* at her, and then left the room." The rhythm of speaking and listening could have ended with this departure had not Emily's mother continued it through her actions. When Emily finds the flowers at her sister's bedside, she knows that her mother has visited, and that she has been heard.

It is a fragment of a conversational rhythm, writ large over several hours and coached irregularly in speech and action. That it continued through her mother's acknowledgement of Emily's speech is, Emily believes~~, the~~ reason that she recalls the incident so clearly, "I think I would have spoken up at other times but for some reason this time I had the impact."

The movement is back and forth, but the hearing and the listening are interrupted and incomplete. When Emily speaks angrily to her mother, it is because "she just wasn't relating to my perception of what the situation called for, the type of compassion that I envisioned." Many years later, Emily can listen beyond the words of her mother's speech to her fear, recognize that "when she was most vulnerable she was most aggressive," but to listen in this way is a great deal to expect of a teenager. After Emily speaks, she leaves, shutting out the possibility of her mother's reply. Even as she talks, however, she seems not to notice the actions, the expressions of the one to whom she speaks, for later this is a part of her story which she can only recreate.

A broader lens enables us to find a barely distinguishable rhythm in Emily's speaking up, although the moment of her speech shows itself to us as very different from the engaging mutuality of a conversational situation.

Perhaps it is the speaking and listening of a larger view, then, that can help us to see that smaller action more clearly.

If we see the conversational rhythm of words, voice and bodies as potentially present, albeit somewhat disrupted, in speaking up, we might look at the different ways in which the distorted rhythm presents itself in various instances of speaking up. What is shown in Karly's story, for example, where speaking up seems to come as a culmination of a lifetime of waiting to be heard?

> I was taught that little girls are happy, and little girls act like a lady, and I think I really believed that if I didn't make a fuss, that if I dealt with the difficult situations I faced as a child, my father and those others around me would recognize and appreciate the effort that it took to do that.

For Karly, putting on a positive face means that there is no one to hear her grief and bewilderment through her childhood loss of her mother. To be a "good girl," happy, cooperative, is so difficult that she is sure others must know and applaud the effort she is making, must hear her silent words.

When words cannot be used to express what is, perhaps they become meaningless. There were years in Karly's life when it was almost physically impossible for her to speak:

> I used to get so choked that I couldn't speak. My throat would ache after three or four words. There was no such a thing as being able to sit and talk with somebody for half an hour. I could not do it when I left high school. Three sentences were the most I could get out in any situation without my throat just closing off and hurting. Physically hurting.

With her husband, Karly is able to speak but again is not heard:

> I learned to speak up with him beginning early in our marriage but because he didn't hear me it was just crying in the wind. ...I would communicate

> something and he wouldn't hear it but I wouldn't realize that he hadn't heard but I had communicated it out of my integrity, you know, from the place where I lived and when he wouldn't hear me it was like, it was like dying.

There is no give and take of speaking and hearing in these years that precede Karly's speaking up, only occasional hopeful efforts to speak and a persistent belief, finally extinguished, that someone must be listening. It is in the heart of a family crisis that Karly realizes that no one is hearing, no one has ever heard.

> I suddenly realized that somehow they had found a way to blame me for his instability, when, you know, it's another aspect of they didn't notice that I was doing it all. Not complaining, not making a fuss, keeping a job and trying to keep things together and not kicking him out. ...And I said, "And you believed something wrong about me without ever asking me."

Karly speaks up to her inlaws, but it seems too late for any rhythm to be established with them.

> I suppose there's some more speaking up I could do there but I don't know if I'll bother. ...I really don't care if I go back and see them again ever. I guess finding out that they had found some way to blame me for their son's lack of ability just floored me in a way. I guess at that point I felt there was no point in investing any more in this relationship between myself and Cal's parents.

The conversation which has never happened is brought to a close. Karly sees her speaking up as part of a new beginning, one which includes speaking, listening and being heard. She notes that "I find that very slowly I've been speaking up a bit more and it's less threatening the more I've done it." At the same time, she is finding people who do listen to her, and learning to speak more clearly.

Karly and Emily are two of the women with whom I was able to talk in an in-depth way about speaking up. As individuals, they have a great deal in common; they are creative, well-educated, articulate writers, even similar in age. While Emily perceives herself as having always spoken easily and frequently, however, Karly is just recently learning to speak more freely. The two stories of speaking up are also quite different when seen in terms of a conversational rhythm, for Emily's does show a pattern of mutual speaking and listening, albeit one that is interrupted and extended, but Karly's account tells of a rhythm desired but never attained. Karly's story, though, is a hopeful one, for her speaking up comes at a point of change, where one begins to experience the possibilities of speaking and listening. In sad contrast, I think of the reply which an older friend of mine made to my request for a story of speaking up, "I can think of lots of times when I could have spoken up, but I never did because I wouldn't have been listened to. I don't know if I can help you." How long will one continue to try to establish a rhythm when there is no response from an essential other person? Where in the listening and the speaking does the rhythm break down?

Being Seen/Being Heard

There is a scene in an Italian movie, The Family, (Committeri, 1987) which speaks to our need to be acknowledged by others. An uncle plays with his small nephew, in a game reminiscent of peek-a-boo. The uncle looks all over for the child, asking, "Where is Paolino? I can't find him!" The child, who remains in plain view, becomes increasingly alarmed as the uncle refuses to recognize his existence. "Here I am," he cries, desperately trying to attract his uncle's attention. "I'm right here." The uncle, oblivious to the boy's distress, continues the game until the boy dissolves in hysterics. The game is a disturbing variation of a usually enjoyable childhood game of peek-a-boo. Lacking the reciprocity that makes it possible for the child to be seen when he wishes to be seen, it becomes, instead, a reminder of our desperate need to be seen and heard by others.

"Look at me! Listen to me!" It is a demand that we make in different ways at different times of our lives. There are the clamouring voices of the kindergarten, "See what I did, teacher." Then there are the madly waving arms in the elementary school classroom, "Ask me, ask me. I know!" Several years later, such a blatant display of enthusiasm would be unthinkable, and our "look at me" is present in strange clothes and hairstyles. As adults, we still need to be heard and seen.

In speaking up, we make ourselves visible, put ourselves in a position where we can be seen and heard. It would be difficult to ignore the teenaged Emily as she speaks up to her mother. Even before she speaks, she is deviating from what is considered appropriate behavior in her household by sitting on the kitchen table, in what would be a prominent position in the room. With her speaking, she moves centre stage, jumping down from the table to face her mother. In this action she is aware, not of feeling significantly closer to her mother but, instead, of her own enlarged physical presence, "I felt very tall." The statement she makes is, to her ears, profound, "Mother, some people understand with their heads, and others with their hearts." The phrase, like the action, stands out: it is one which will not be overlooked. And it is punctuated with a flourish: "I just glared at her, and then left the room. Very dramatic." Part of the memory that remains with Emily is of the astonishment on the faces of her brothers and sisters as she speaks up. This is an unusual act, conducted in a way that will certainly be noticed.

The visibility that Emily gains through her speaking up is very apparent if one considers it in contrast to the image of one of her brothers sitting quietly as an onlooker to the scene. She definitely becomes the focus of events in the kitchen, and her action probably lingers for some time in the minds of those who view it. The drama with which she conducts her speaking up suggests that she is very much aware of being the centre of attention, and of the impact which she is having. She seems to be watching with a third eye: Her statement sounds, to her, "so profound," and her exit is, at least in retrospect, "very dramatic."

In addition to the assessments that she makes from her own watching of her action, Emily also can judge herself according to the responses of others. Her siblings comment positively, "Boy, that was neat what you said" but the outcome which has the most significance has to do with changing her mother's perspective, "I felt heard. Really heard."

We become visible when we speak up, placing ourselves where we may be seen and heard. Even so, however, there is no guarantee of our acknowledgement. "I learned to speak up with him (her husband) beginning early in our marriage," Karly says," but because he didn't hear me it was just crying in the wind." A sensitive, articulate woman, Karly describes clearly the feelings of not being heard.

> I would get upset, very upset. Because it was always a challenge to my integrity somehow that he hadn't heard me. It was a challenge to the core of the inside of me that held my life, that he couldn't hear me. And I could never understand why he couldn't hear me. Whether it was a couldn't hear or a wouldn't hear. A refusal to hear regardless, whether it was a conscious or unconscious refusal on his part my voice didn't go through, and it had no effect, ever...I would get very confused...it was very disorienting, there was no logic, I couldn't fit pieces together because I would communicate something and he wouldn't hear it but I wouldn't realize that he hadn't heard it but I had communicated it out of my integrity, you know, from the place where I lived and when he couldn't hear me it was like, it was like dying. It was like being killed. Only it was always in little pieces and I couldn't see it. All I felt was a terrible confusion, a

> whirling. I couldn't understand. And I always blamed myself--there was something wrong with me.
> (Karly, taped conversation)

"I couldn't understand," "I couldn't fit pieces together," and "I always blamed myself." We have initiated an exchange, tried to start the rhythm, but our efforts are rebuffed. What does it mean? Did we do something wrong?

> There is nothing more frustrating than trying to communicate an idea and having it misunderstood or not even listened to. "Is my idea silly?" or "Can't people understand me?" are questions that come to mind when you're not paid attention to.
> (Andrea, journal entry)

We are desperate to make sense of not being heard, for the action belongs to another, but it may tell us about ourselves. For if we are not heard, if no one listens, do we have value? Do we even exist?

Carol Gilligan (1988) writes of the place that voice plays with regard to the developing self, noting that, when defined in the context of relationships, "identity is formed through the gaining of voice or perspective, and self is known through the experience of engagement with different points of view." "Yet," she goes on, "the vulnerability of voice to exclusion underscores how easily this process can fail when a wish for victory or domination defeats efforts at reaching accord." (p. 153) She quotes one of the teenaged girls who took part in her study:

> If one person is trying to block the other out totally, that person is going to win and not hear a thing that the other person is saying. If that is what they are trying to do, then they will accomplish their objective: to totally disregard the other person. (p. 154)

If we need the recognition of the other and it is not forthcoming, we may search for ways to achieve that acknowledgement. I ask my students to take part in an exercise where one person speaks, and the partner doesn't listen. The response is dramatic: "I found myself trying to find more interesting things to say, to try to get her attention;" "I'm not a violent person, so I was shocked to find myself wanting to put my hands on her shoulders and give her a good shake!" We may look for ways to be heard or we may give up trying: "I felt like it didn't matter what I said;" "I felt like I wasn't important;" "I felt like what I had to say wasn't important;" "I felt like I wasn't there."

If only a certain kind of speech is heard, perhaps, in our need to be acknowledged, that is the speech that we will adopt. Karly recalls,

> I was taught that little girls are happy, and little girls act like a lady, and I think I really believed that if I didn't make a fuss, that if I dealt with the difficult situations I faced as a child, my father and those others around me would recognize and appreciate the effort that it took to do that.
>
> (Karly, taped conversation)

The confrontational speech of speaking up may not be the kind of speech that others want to hear, will hear, from us. Mary recalls,

> We didn't speak up much as children, because if you did you'd get a spanking. ...I remember when I was eleven or twelve years old I was told to set the table and I talked back about it and I got one of the worst thrashings I've ever had.
>
> (Mary, taped conversation)

When it is so difficult to make ourselves heard, do we opt for silence? And if silence is our usual choice, how different, then, when we speak up!

Taking Control by Speaking Up

We speak up to someone, and our tone is harsh and relentless, pushing against the other. Certainly the speech that occurs is less an exchange than a barrage, for we leave small room for the other to speak and, even if they did, we would perhaps be little inclined to hear. We fill the space and the time with our words; we determine the content of the speech; we establish the distance that lies between us and the other.

Claiming Space and Time

In an earlier chapter, we heard fragments of Gwendolyn's story, in which she confronts school authorities concerning a disciplinary action involving her daughter. In a more complete version of her account, we find that her words are edged with issues of space and time:

> I took it on and phoned the school and said I was very annoyed about what had happened and I wanted to come in and talk about it. So I went in to see the principal...and I was explaining that I didn't think it was fair and I didn't like this incident being on her record. And so at that point, I think I was getting a little hot under the collar, and the principal called in two other people who had been involved, two men on staff. ...I was sitting facing the principal across the desk and the two men came in and stood over to the side. And I think now that that should have made me feel better--they weren't even sitting down--but somehow I felt they were up there and threatening. ...I repeated everything, and by this point I think I was getting very upset and emotional. ...I think I was feeling nervous about having made the decision to speak up because this was a couple of days after the incident and everything else--and I was carrying through and I was complaining and I was going in and doing all these things. And I recall very distinctly this man telling me all the wonderful things the school had done for my daughter. ... And that was sort of like the spark that set me off. And I told him, "How dare you. You were lucky to have my daughter in your school, and you should know this. Not only did you get a popular, beautiful, charming woman to come to your school, you also got a bright, articulate woman who added an awful lot and brought honour to your school and how dare you say you earned these honours for her!". ...He didn't say too much more. ...And I recall I was sitting down and the principal was sitting down and these two men had been called in from their classes and I was beginning to think, "Oh, my goodness." They had been teaching and had been called in from their classes to meet with this parent. And he had been standing up and just sort of backed away a little bit and didn't really say an awful lot after that.

> ...I felt as if he felt I had no right to be there or say anything about the incident, and everything had been treated very appropriately.
>
> (Gwendolyn, taped conversation)

Gwendolyn enters a space that is not hers, and which might, in fact, carry some rather intimidating childhood associations about "going to the principal's office." She is seated across from the principal's desk, in the "visitor's chair." The principal calls in others; the situation which was one and one is now three and one. The two new arrivals stand--they do not have a place in the sense of being seated, but as they stand she experiences them as "up there and threatening." She notes her feeling that one of the teachers felt she had no right to be there. Still, Gwendolyn stays resolutely in this space and even moves out to claim it by, as she notes later in her story, "actually using Kleenex off the desk!" Feeling threatened by the men standing over her, she drives one of them back with her words, challenges his right to claim her daughter's achievements for the school, and silences him.

As Gwendolyn attempts to claim the space of her speaking, so, too, does she take possession of its time. She does this first by arranging the meeting and then, resolutely, by refusing to give in to her knowledge that the teachers' time with her is bought at the expense of their work with their students. Her command of the time and space seems to be a way of emphasizing to herself and to the others that her concerns are important.

We must always make some claim upon time and space when we speak but, in speaking up, we definitely assume control. One way by which we might manage the space between ourselves and the one-spoken-to is simply to fill that space with words and with our physical being. We could take over the space of another, and pre-empt the right to "air time." Perched on the edge of the kitchen table, Emily occupies a forbidden spot. When she speaks, she steps down toward her mother, "feeling very tall." For the brief time of her speaking, she commands the space and holds the right to speak; few would challenge her claim.

We must create a space and time for our speaking, and we may do so by pushing others aside. For this moment, our needs, our concerns, take priority.

Following our Own Agenda

How can we allow the claim of the other to interfere when we have a need which is so pressing, so vital to us? How can this be when, as is so often in speaking up, our desire is to change the thinking and the actions of that other person? When Emily speaks up to her mother, it is because she wishes to change her mother's perception of a situation to one which Emily feels is more appropriate. If she allows herself to recognize her mother's feeling of vulnerability, if she admits her mother's claim, might she dilute her own conviction, her own effectiveness in bringing about change?

For Karly, the situation is not so much one of denying her inlaws their different view, for she can talk about the experiences that have brought them to that viewpoint, and explain why their perspective is different from hers. When she speaks up, however, she refuses to allow this knowledge into her dealings with them.

> It was interesting because normally, at any other point in my life when I have spoken up I've had so many feelings of guilt and "Should I have said that?"...I guess it was just the ridiculousness of what he said...it was beyond reason to take it seriously. (Karly, taped conversation)

If we wish to exclude the claim of the other, we may need to control as much as possible their opportunities to speak to us. Emily recalls little of her mother's immediate, actual response to Emily's speaking and we might wonder if it was a speech which she could allow herself to hear. In any case, her dramatic departure leaves small opportunity for her mother to reply. Karly, too, has little interest in extending her speaking up into an exchange, "They weren't listening, or had already made up their minds, so why bother."

There is little recognition of the claim of the other in these speaking up situations, no room for extending the speaking into a conversational rhythm. If we were to truly listen to the other, would we be too close? Might we be moved to come to their side? It does seem necessary to speaking up that we keep a distance from them.

Controlling Distance

As Karly speaks up with her inlaws, she describes feeling, "almost a distance but not really a distance. Like I was still in the situation but..." To withdraw from the scene, in spirit, as Karly does here, or physically, as with Emily's quick departure, would seem to inhibit the claim of the other, for even if that person reaches out, there will be no one there to touch. Sometimes, too, the entire act of speaking up occurs from a distance: by letter, for example, or over the telephone. Karly mentions dealing with her anger at her father by writing him a letter, "I still could not tell him face to face. Because as soon as my father comes around, I immediately become the little girl that tries to please again and I can't seem to stop doing that." From a distance, her father loses his power, his ability to make a claim. When Mary has a dispute with her neighbour, she initiates action through the appropriate city office, then responds to the neighbour's irate phone call. Mary recalls, "When I heard her voice it was with a bit of trepidation because I knew when we reported that there would probably be some repercussions...because she's pretty fiery and not too careful about her choice of words." The distancing of the telephone communication, and the intervention of a third party, seem to make the neighbour's claim a little less threatening.

When we create a distance between our selves and the one-spoken to, it is we who are in control. We will come closer if and when we wish; the choice is not with the other.

When we speak up, we take control of time and space, of what is said and heard, our distance from the one-spoken-to. We establish our claim, and ignore the needs of the other. It is a way of being with another that seems very different from that to which we are accustomed: an unusual way, a surprising way. Perhaps we are more likely to listen or to agree, to allow the other to dominate the time and space, create the agenda, establish the distance between us. That the objectification of the other in speaking up is not comfortable for us is perhaps most evident in our relationship with that person after we have spoken up.

The Aftermath of Speaking Up

At the height of speaking up, the one spoken-to may be seen only as instrumental to the accomplishment of our desires. Like Emily, we might speak then leave quickly, to forestall any claims by the other. There seems to be a threat in the possibility of that claim, for perhaps we do not want to understand, to be drawn into another view. But what might happen if we stay, or when we meet that other person at a different time?

Corine tells of a situation at a meeting where she speaks up through the safer distance of a third party, but then attempts to regain the confidence of the person she fears she has offended:

> I was reluctant to speak up to him directly, so I did it via a comment to another person in the group--a person I thought could probably handle it. But even then I found myself listening to him in an especially attentive way, nodding and smiling a lot. I suppose I wanted him to know that even though I didn't agree with the way he

> talked about women I still thought he was OK. Or maybe--I hope this isn't what it was--I just wanted to make sure he still liked me!
> (Corine, notes from an informal conversation)

Is this a relation of pleasing and appeasement? Are we still objectifying the other, using this individual to gratify our own needs? Or are we attempting to re-establish the conversational rhythm which we have disrupted, to enter into a dialogue with the other person?

Years after the speaking up incident which she describes, Dianne finds herself in the position of working as a colleague with one of the parties who was involved in her speaking up. "I've just chosen not to mention it at all," she comments. Similarly, Irene, months after her speaking up, goes out of her way to avoid meeting the person to whom she spoke,

> I suppose I feel embarrassed. Maybe if we sat down and really talked it through it would be OK, I could feel comfortable with him again. But I think if I brought it up now he probably wouldn't even remember or would think I was weird for dwelling on it for all this time."
> (Irene, notes from an informal conversation)

This acute sensitivity to the reactions of the other is in sharp contrast with the disregard which seems to characterize the actual time of speaking up. While at the time of speaking up we may objectify the one-spoken-to in order to accomplish our own desires, after speaking we perhaps try to return to a more conversational tone. The other speaks and we listen, nodding, smiling. Or from a standpoint of greater distance, we seek to ignore the incident or wish that it could be discussed in a way that would facilitate understanding. What is it about the relation of speaking up that causes us this discomfort?

I have contrasted the relation of speaking up with the mutuality that can occur in conversation. It is a comparison which excludes a great many possibilities, for certainly conversation does not always involve reciprocity and caring, and other speech contexts may vary still again. Gadamer (1975) provides a more comprehensive view, and one which might be useful at this point in our discussion, when he summarizes three possible kinds of relations between humans.

Ways of Speaking

Gadamer (1975) describes three kinds of relations that can occur between humans. The first, he maintains, is one in which we understand the other person not as an individual but out of some prior, general knowledge. Perhaps I am meeting with a new student, a young woman of about my daughter's age. Acting out of my knowledge of my daughter and her friends, I make assumptions about my student's life, thoughts and values. When I relate to her from this perspective, I am not open to her, not really hearing. If my student accepts this division which I establish between myself as the person who knows and herself as the person who is known, she may not even attempt to bridge the gap between us with her speech. (Smith, 1983) Certainly, it will be unlikely that her speech will be heard, for the act of listening challenges the "understanding" of prior assumptions. I close out the opportunity to get to know my student as an individual, and preclude any possibility that we will come to really understand one another.

In the second type of relation, the other person is experienced as an individual, but there is no reciprocity, no equal claim. We believe that we understand that person in advance, know them better than they know themselves, and our relation with them becomes one in which we each are struggling for recognition. My favorite example of this type of relation occurs in a day care centre when, Joey, age four, tells the teacher than he is hungry and the teacher replies, "You can't be hungry yet, it's only eleven o'clock." This type of relation, Gadamer (1975) believes, is common in education and social work. I recognize it in the "you shoulds" which I address to my family, my students, sometimes my friends. It replaces listening with advice, or with "talking over" the other, and keeps me from hearing the voice of the other person.

The third mode of relation is one in which the members are open to one another, and each listens to the claim of the other. This is, in Gadamer's words, "to experience the 'Thou' truly as a 'Thou.' This is the position of really listening, and it allows each partner to feel heard.

In Gadamer's first two modes of human relation, one member of the relation is seen as an object, either as representing a particular type or category, or as understood by, and for the purposes of, the other person. Speaking up occurs within one of these two modes, where the one-spoken-to exists, not as an individual, but in relation to the needs and desires of the speaker. Where there is a clear and specific goal, and where the goal involves a change in the actions of the other, the claims of that person stand in the way of its achievement. Efforts are made to exclude that claim, to achieve a safe distance from it, or to manage it by taking control of time and space.

Gadamer's work suggests that rhythm, as a "movement characterized by equal or alternating beats" is only possible when there is the openness of listening, when the claims of each individual can be recognized and admitted. We have seen the rhythm of conversation as breaking down in speaking up, perhaps barely discernable when stretched over time and action, perhaps never beginning. Still, in the aftermath of speaking up there is often an attempt to re-establish the rhythm. Perhaps we strive for an ideal that has to do with reciprocity and caring, for another way of speaking up that would achieve our goals while admitting the subjectivity of the other. Certainly we know that it is possible to solve problems without confrontation, without excluding the individuality of the other. Kamila describes such an exchange in her story of speaking up, an account which shows the risk of that action but which is atypical in its recognition of the one-spoken-to:

> One of the mothers at the day care was always coming late to pick up her children. The teachers were upset because they needed to get home themselves--many of them were taking classes or they had families to look after. I wasn't looking forward to confronting her with this problem, but I knew that I had to say something. When she came in that evening to pick up Robbie and Amanda, I asked if she could talk with me for a minute. I started out by asking her about her day and about how her job was going. I found out that she is under a lot of pressure from her boss. He is giving her a lot of extra work to do and she's afraid that if she says she can't stay late to do it, he will fire her. Before I'd felt angry with her for the problem she was causing us, but now I really felt sorry for her because she has to have that job to support her family and her boss is taking advantage of her. She started to cry as she was telling me this, and I kind of gave her a little hug and offered her a Kleenex. Then I made her a cup of coffee and when she was feeling better, I told her that it was causing problems for us at the day care when she came late to pick up her children. What we worked out is that she would ask her friend to come by for the children on the days when she has to work late. So this is what's been happening since. I felt good about the way our meeting went. I met my goals, but we also understand each other better now and can talk more easily.
>
> (Kamila, written account)

In such a situation, we speak and we listen. The claims of each individual are recognized.

When we speak up, however, strong emotion carries us into the speech, and into a particular kind of relation that involves both risk and possibilities. The emotion, usually shown as anger, stands in the way of admitting that other, allowing us to close out the other so that we can say what we must say. Can there be speaking up without strong emotion? The stories of speaking up suggest that there cannot; emotion seems to be a necessary part of that action. If emotion did not carry us into speaking we might well remain silent. While speaking up is certainly not the only way to speak, not our desired way to speak, perhaps in certain kinds of situations and because of our cultural experience, it tends to be the only way for women to speak.

Reconciling Self and Other

In Chapter Six, I mentioned a few aspects of women's socialization which may contribute to a self-awareness which is, in Freedman's (1986) term, "heavily filtered through others." The comment was presented in a negative context, pointing to female vulnerability, yet the work of Carol Gilligan and other feminist theorists reframes what might be construed as female over-dependency upon the views of others as a female mode of development in which connectedness with others plays a vital role.

In a 1974 article, Chodorow observes that females are socialized to be concerned about, and involved with others. They are encouraged to nurture and to assume interpersonal responsibility. In The Reproduction of Mothering (1978), she notes that, "In any given society, feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does." (p. 187)

Gilligan (1982) draws upon the work of theorists such as Chodorow and Miller (1976) to create a representation of human development which encompasses the experience of both males and females. She observes that for males, morality tends to hinge upon concepts of rights and an ethic of justice, whereas for women, morality grows from issues of responsibility, in an ethic of care. This corresponds with central developmental concerns for males with separation, individuation and autonomy, and for females with continuing attachment, connectedness and interdependence, a difference which arises out of a culture where mothers are the primary caregivers, and where little girls are able to maintain their female connections with their mothers while boys must separate in order to establish a male identity. Gilligan sees the two themes of justice and care as potentially present during the lifespan of both males and females, and their convergence as marked by crisis and change.

In a later work, Making Connections (1990), Gilligan discusses the role of speech, and particularly of disagreement, in the thinking and development of teenaged girls:

> Pleasure in relationships is thus linked to knowledge gained through relationships, and girls voice their desire to know more about themselves and also to be better known themselves. "I wish to become better in the relationship with my mother," Ellen says, "to be able to more easily to disagree with her,"--disagreement here being a sign of relationship, a manifestation of two people coming together. (p. 20)

Gilligan notes that girls are most likely to disagree in close relationships, where they most wish to be understood and where they believe they will be listened to. "Repeatedly," she writes, "girls emphasize the need for open conflict and voicing disagreement." (p. 23) To these teenaged girls, it seems that what might appear to us as speaking up is a vital activity, one that forges relationships and helps them to know themselves.

Gilligan's work with teenaged girls and women leads her to conclude that a central crisis in women's lives, and one which comes into focus during adolescence, has to do with finding a way to maintain connection with others while still including ourselves:

> Listening to different women and following women's thinking and lives over time, I heard concerns about survival labelled "selfish" and replaced by concerns about responsiveness to others as the condition for relationship, which often merged with the conventions of feminine goodness where the good woman is "selfless" in her devotion to meeting other's needs. The strategies of indirection that the need to appear selfless

> encouraged in women sometimes precipitated a crisis, which then led to concerns about truth: the psychological truth that relationship implies the presence of both self and other, and the social truth that caring for others requires resources but is associated with economic disadvantage in North American Society. Facing these truths, women tended either to ask, in effect, why care? or to ask how it was possible for them to live in connection with themselves, with others, and with the world. (p. 9)

What might we draw from Gilligan's theories that could tell us about speaking up, and about speech? The need for connectedness suggests the importance to female development of being able to speak freely to others, knowing that we will be heard. We might also read a subtext here, which has to do with the limits of speaking up: to what extent may we speak without shattering important bonds of connection? And finally, from a cultural perspective, we see a conflict between the "selfishness" of speaking up and the "selflessness" that is expected of females.

To speak up for oneself is a "selfish" act, that is, an act based in one's own needs and put forward in a way that excludes the claim of the other. As such, it violates cultural norms of female selflessness. When we speak up for someone else, we partially avoid the problem of our selfishness, for while we ignore the responsibility that we might otherwise feel for the one-spoken-to, we still uphold the norms associated with the "good woman" by defending or advocating for another person. If we are supported by others in our speaking up, perhaps we experience that agreement as an indication that we do speak for others, that we present their concerns as well as our own. In situations where we send a message to a third party through our speaking up, we can again frame our actions as a responsibility to that other person. When we speak up for ourselves, however, we place ourselves in a position of censure: how can we have the audacity to put ourselves forward in this way?

Speaking up could be a selfish act, but for women who have been socialized to be quiet, to be passive, and to put others first, perhaps it represents an attempt to renegotiate a balance between self and selflessness. It may be an "I am" and an "I matter" where the "I" has previously been overlooked in the attention to others. To draw attention to oneself, to demand attention to one's own needs, to take up "air space," to not listen to the other, may be very new behavior. Even where the selfishness of the act is diminished by the fact of speaking up for another, the mode of speaking may well be a novel one for the speaker.

To see speaking up as a way of negotiating a balance between self and others, where the scale is usually tipped toward the consideration of others' needs, is compatible in some ways with the Belenky et al. (1986) levels of knowing, in that the move inward to subjective knowing is prerequisite to the evolution of the constructivist knower who is involved in balancing her responsibility to self and others. Perhaps, for some women at least, speaking up must precede speaking with.

The Societal Context of Speaking Up

In one sense, a discussion of societal factors which might impact upon speaking up is irrelevant, for our concern is with what women experience when they, as members of this particular culture, speak up. As Levin (1988) points out, however,

> Self-development will always reach a point where it should become clear that social conditions must be changed before further individuation is possible. It is at this point that we may begin to appreciate the fact that the processes of transformation in our vision are inherently social. Self and society are not separate systems. Needful changes in the one call for, and

> are responsive to, corresponding changes in the other." (p. 319)

To what extent can there be reciprocity in a speech relation when the individuals involved do not possess equal power? It is a question with which parents, teachers and members of the helping professions struggle, one that is inherent in Gadamer's description of the second mode of relation as the one most common in teaching and social work. The effect of an unequal relation upon speech is presented starkly and explicitly in this passage:

> The wind of tradition blowing through women is a chill wind, because it brings a message of exclusion--stay out; because it brings a message of subordination--stay under; because it brings a message of objectification--become the object of another's worship or desire, see yourself as you have been seen for centuries through a male gaze. And because all of the suffering, the endless litany of storm and shipwreck is presented as necessary or even good for civilization, the message to women is: keep quiet and notice the absence of women and say nothing." (Gilligan, Lyons, and Hamner, 1990, p. 26))

Silence may be the safest refuge when the other occupies a position of power, when you are a student dissatisfied with a teacher, an employee angry with an employer, a child upset with an adult and, as this quote implies, when you occupy a subordinate status in society. Then speaking up may take us into a position of danger.

To speak down, according to Webster, is to speak in a condescending manner, assuming a position of superior knowledge or status. (Gove, 1971) If we speak up, then, do we feel we are we acting from an inferior position? Does the difficulty of speaking up derive partly from the power which we assume another has over us? As Jean Baker Miller (1986) points out, there are certain patterns of behavior associated with a subordinate status, and they are behaviors that may be necessary to ensure survival. There are often very tangible risks involved with speaking up, for example, the loss of a job, a poor school evaluation, the termination of a relationship. There are other risks associated with the deviation from societal expectations concerning women's behavior. To speak calmly, clearly, and without hesitation in the face of such risk may be beyond our capabilities. To achieve reciprocity in speech, a speaking-with, it seems that there must be an assumption of equality, or at least an absence of danger.

There may be danger in speaking, and one danger is the possibility that we will not be heard. In feminist analysis, there is a great deal of attention to the "different" voices of women. Carol Gilligan entitles her 1982 work In a Different Voice, implying that women experience and express the world differently from men, and that their expressions are not heard because society is structured around a male view and a male voice. A Feminist Dictionary (Kramarae and Treichler, 1985, p. 429) quotes Michele Roberts (1983, pp. 62-3) to define speech as "our voices, which can be heard by men if we express 'anger in masculine terms: aggro, smashing things up.' Not heard as often if the speech invites 'an audience to listen, to open up, to take images inside.'" Feminist work offers a perspective in which "not being heard" becomes tied, at least to some extent, to the fact of being female. (To say that "not being heard" is a part of the female condition may invite essentialist arguments, but it can also be considered within the context of our socialization and our place in society.) From this point of view, speaking up represents a "translation" into a kind of speech which we hope will be heard.

I have described anger, and the other emotions of speaking up, as messages from our body about what needs to be changed in "the present lived moment of our historical situation." (Levin, 1988, p. 318) The anger of speaking up may be directed toward a particular injustice and it may suggest a new way for us to be in the world. When seen against a societal backdrop of female acquiesence or silence, however, the anger of speaking up may have to do with the conditions in which women live, and the act of speaking may signal an unwillingness to continue to exist in that way.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Is Speaking Up a Good Thing?

"I have a sense that speaking up may not necessarily be a good thing," my instructor commented very early on in my research. My response was decidedly sceptical, for I had chosen to explore speaking up precisely because it seemed to be a positive action for women to take, and I had already found that other women shared my view. But I came away from that conversation with a small question niggling at my passionate conviction. My determination to learn about the experience of speaking up needed to include a question about value: "Is speaking up a good thing?"

Now, months later, I have come back to that question that was put aside, but not forgotten, during my exploration, "Is speaking up a good thing?" I come to this problem understanding somewhat more clearly than I did at the time of our early conversation just what speaking up is for women, and I can situate the act against a cultural feminist backdrop which suggests that speaking up may have particular significance for women. But is it a good thing? I have no simple answer, only parts of answers.

Considering the value of speaking up raises a concern with goodness, for what, exactly, is good, and how do we know it? I return to early chapters to see how goodness shows itself in the comments that women make, and in the act of speaking up. I find enthusiastic comments about the value of speaking up and an indication of the power of that action to affirm the existence and the abilities of the speaker. I also find some ambivalence, and a suggestion that speaking up takes place within a mode of relation which may not be desirable. Is it possible that speaking up can be a good thing for individuals, but a negative act within the context of a relationship?

The conclusion that speaking up occurs within a mode of relation that is less than desirable draws upon lived experience, but also upon Gadamer's (1975) description of three possible modes of relations between humans. In this conceptualization, the preferred form of relation is one in which there is reciprocity. Yet women's stories tell us that speaking up does not occur in situations where there is equality, but rather under circumstances where the one-spoken-to is perceived as having greater power than the person who speaks.

The issue of power surfaces at various points in speaking up: as an act of taking control by the speaker, and as an attempt to equalize an unequal power relation. There is still another dimension to the research, however, and this is one which brings matters of power firmly to the forefront. I chose to frame this research in a cultural-political perspective in an attempt to create additional possibilities for understanding. Feminism is premised upon women's oppression, that is, upon women's state of institutionalized inequality in relation to men, so it is directly concerned with power. Thus issues of power emerge from yet another perspective and it becomes necessary to consider all of the various power aspects in combination.

Earlier, I asked if it were possible that speaking up might be a good thing for an individual to do and, at the same time, be a negative action in terms of her relationship with another. The cultural-political perspective adds another layer for consideration, one which has to do with the goodness of the action for women as a group within the larger society. It is possible that an action which is negative in the context of a particular relationship could be constructive from a societal perspective. As the layers build, so, it seems, do the possibilities for contradiction.

How Do We Know What is Good?

Goodness, according to Oxford, has to do with "having the right or desired qualities;" with being "satisfactory, adequate...healthy, beneficial...commendable, worthy...a desirable end or object, a thing worth attaining." Buried in the deceptively straightforward definition are questions of truth and virtue which have concerned philosophers for thousands of years. The good, says Aristotle, is "that which in fact a thing aims to achieve in accord with its inherent nature" (Angeles, 1981, p. 111). Plato ties the good of anything to its existence in a rational order, while the utilitarianism of Bentham and John Stuart Mill tells us that the goodness of an act, as moral worth, is judged according to the goodness and badness of its consequences. In these conceptions the goodness of speaking up is seen as depending upon the consequences of the action for ourselves and others, on our own satisfaction with our action, or on the judgements of the culture about what is right for individuals or what is right for women.

Several years ago, I asked my female students to write about the topic, "How do we know when something is right?" Now I see that their answers tell about their conceptions of goodness. "You will know it's right because it feels right", most agree: "You feel happy"; "you feel pleased"; "you feel relaxed and content"; "you feel comfortable with it"; "the feeling is relaxed and flowing." "If you make a wrong decision," Sandra notes, "you feel tense, confused and unsure." These women would agree with the comment made by one of their group that, "Mostly, I go with the gut." A number of women suggest that you can know rightness by the consequences of an action. Even then, however, the final measure tends to rest in feelings: "You would feel pleased with an accomplishment;" "the result is satisfying;" "you would feel happy about an outcome." Even though rightness may be determined ultimately by one's emotional reaction, some responses are a reminder that the decision exists within a social context, for rightness is "inner desire confirmed by outer circumstance," or it means that "no one is hurt by the decision (as long as they have not done something wrong)." "If your decisions affect others," Nancy writes, "discuss with them and pool your answers to come up with the right decision." Moral standards are mentioned as a part of the measure of right, and it is noted that, "The way you were brought up makes a significant difference." There is a strong sense, however, that moral standards are personal and individual: "You must feel right about your moral standards"; "everyone has their own moral standards"; "what is right is not necessarily the same for everyone at a given time"; "what feels right for me may not be totally right for another"; "It may not be right for someone else but for you it's right."

Gilligan (1982) observes that females and males have quite different ways of talking about moral problems and of describing the relationship between themselves and others. Males, she believes, are concerned with rights and justice, whereas females focus upon responsibility and relationships. Are the ways of considering rightness and goodness that I see in my students' writing ways that are more common to females? Perhaps the important message, for my purposes, is the reminder of possible difference.

What is striking to me in these women's explanations is their heavy reliance on body messages to confirm rightness and their belief that rightness is particular to a given individual, time and circumstance. That women use their feelings as an indicator of the rightness of an action lends particular significance to the satisfaction that they note in relation to speaking up.

Feeling Good About Speaking Up

The stories that I gather for my research frequently mention the gratification that women find in their action of speaking up. "What a good feeling," Heather comments, and Joanne recalls, "how good it felt." Maria notes, "I feel really good about myself for standing up for my rights," and Ruth comments that "usually I have been very happy with myself for speaking up about something that mattered to me." If the standard of goodness that we adopt is one that derives from the individual's emotional response to speaking up, comments such as these show that the action is undoubtedly a good thing.

The phenomenology of speaking up suggests some of the reasons why speaking up may feel so good. For example, where speaking up is an alternative to the silence of "wishing I had spoken," it seems to be a very positive action in that it affirms the speaker as a person who exists, who matters, and who can create change. Power, according to Oxford, is "the ability to do or act," and speaking up seems to be a clear and decisive act of exercising power. There is an opening of possibilities, too, for the future execution of power. "All I wanted was some changes in the school," Heather writes, "which I got. I couldn't believe it. After that I made more and more change. What a good feeling."

The Discomfort of Speaking Up

Although we may recall our speaking up with satisfaction, the emotions that take us into action, and even the ones which we experience after the fact, may be neither positive nor simple. My own experience of speaking up, recounted in Chapter I, is hedged by ambivalence, for I feel pleased with myself for expressing my feelings of exclusion but embarrassed by my display of emotion and worried about the reactions of others. I tell myself that speaking up is a good thing to do, and wonder at the doubts which undermine my certainty. The exploration of speaking up provides a possible explanation for some of these feelings, for it shows the risk that is inherent in exposing ourselves to others' judgements. Whether a consequence of our speech is losing a job or a friend, failing to attain our objective, or being seen by others as emotional and therefore unstable, the risks of speaking up are real and present. After I speak up, I have little indication as to the way that others view my speech, and I am left to wonder about their judgements of me. Others who obtain a positive result from speaking up may consider that response as a confirmation of the rightness of their action, and be left without doubts. In the women's stories, the act of speaking up is valued in and of itself, and this is reflected in my reminders to myself that I have done a good thing by speaking up.

The discomfort which attends speaking up derives, in part, from the difficulty of the action. "I am a quiet person," Ruth writes, "and something has to be very important for me to speak up. Maybe I am afraid what I say will not 'come out' right or perhaps I will face rejection." "I don't know where I summoned up the strength," Marilyn says. Women often mention the difficulty of speaking up, and their comments underline, once again, the risk of that action. Yet there is something about overcoming difficulty which heightens the satisfaction of speaking up. As we see in the phenomenological explorations, just taking that risk yields rewards by affirming who we are and what we can do in the world.

No matter how successful our action, we may feel later discomfort in our relationship with the one-spoken-to. In speaking up, we have taken control of the time and the space of our speaking. The concerns on the agenda are ours--there is little room for the claims of that person to whom we speak. We distance ourselves from those persons, and refuse to recognize their needs or concerns. After our speaking up, however, we find it difficult to know how to relate to these persons who have been objects in our eyes. We will respond by making a concerted effort to re-engage them or, on the other hand, we will simply avoid them.

Gadamer's (1975) discussion of modes of relation between individuals offers an explanation for the discomfort that we seem to feel with the relation of speaking up, for we see that, in speaking up, the one-spoken-to exists for the purposes of the speaker, in a relation which contrasts unfavourably with one in which the claims of each partner are recognized and heard. There is no possibility for the back-and-forthness of conversational rhythm, of speaking-with, when we are trying to override the concerns of the other in order to make ourselves heard. A view of speaking up as less desirable than speaking-with helps to explain some of the difficulties that we find with speaking up.

Thus, there are several areas of discomfort inherent in speaking up, and while some, such as the overcoming of difficulty, may tend to reinforce our satisfaction and sense of rightness regarding our action, others, such as the relationship with the one-spoken-to, may remain as problematic. A reliance upon bodily messages as a measure of rightness or goodness may leave us in a state of uncertainty, for we might experience satisfaction with our own action but a continuing discomfort in our relationship with the one-spoken-to.

At this point of contradiction, it seems that we must go beyond an attention to body messages if we are to reach any conclusions about the goodness of speaking up. Consideration of our relationship with another, with others, brings us here, for many questions reside in the intertwining of self and other. Can we, as a woman in my class asked, feel good about an action that is hurting others? If we are speaking up to help a third person, does that justify our treatment of the one-spoken-to? If another has treated us unjustly, do they still deserve our consideration? They are questions which move us into the realm of power, for power seems inherent in the act of speaking up and in the relation to another which speaking up involves.

Speaking Up as an Issue of Power

Considering the relations of speaking up brings us easily into a concern with power. The action of speaking up seems precisely to be about power, about "the ability to do or act" (Allen, 1990). There is a second dimension to the issue of power, however, and that has to do with our experience with the one-spoken-to. In this regard, we might return to Oxford and yet another definition of power as "political or social ascendancy or control." In speaking up, the speaker controls the speaking situation and, at least temporarily, takes ascendancy over the one-spoken-to. The relation which speaking up establishes with the one-spoken-to, therefore, might be described as one of power-over. Part of our effort to decide whether speaking up is a good thing would need to involve a consideration of the value of power-for and of power-over, an issue discussed later in this chapter.

Speaking up is understood in terms of personal power or power over the one-spoken-to, but also as a response to, or within, a particular set of power relations. In chapter seven, I contrasted speaking down with speaking up, and questioned whether, in speaking up, we feel that we are acting from a subordinate position. The stories of speaking up tell us that the persons to whom we tend to speak up are teachers, employers, colleagues, mothers and other relatives, and sometimes peers. Children and employees are not the ones to whom we speak up: the action is reserved, it seems, for those who we see as occupying a dominant role in relation to us. Perhaps this is because speaking up requires risk, and we do not think in terms of risk when we confront someone who occupies a role which we see as parallel or subordinate to ours.

From a cultural-political perspective, we might ask whether certain groups--women, children, students--in society occupy positions which are more likely to be described as inferior in status, and whether speaking up might have a particular significance for members of these groups. Issues of power tend to move us from a phenomenological perspective into a political view and, in so doing, become the pivotal point at which the two thrusts of this research, the phenomenological and the cultural-political, meet.

Bringing a Cultural/Political Perspective to Speaking Up

In Chapter Two, I argued for the need to highlight the cultural context for women's experience as separate from, but related to, the phenomenology of women speaking up. It is an approach that followed from my desire to look specifically at women's experience, for I felt that, while both females and males may have the experience of speaking up, women's experience might be different or more significant because of the cultural context in which it occurs. While I could not compare male and female lived-experience and was not, in fact, concerned with showing difference or similarity between the two, I could suggest possible explanations or additional dimensions to female experience by bringing in a cultural view.

Lived experience is always situated in culture, so that cultural aspects are already present in women's stories of speaking up. When women talk about the difficulty of speaking up, they talk about risk and, intertwined with risk, about power. Jana's story of defending a younger brother who has been blamed for her wrongdoing locates risk in her relation with her parents: "How will they react when she contradicts their interpretation of what has happened?" Given the power inequalities of the parent/child relation, Jana's action is a risk and a challenge to her parent's power. Fortunately, there is nothing in Jana's story to suggest that her parents were unwilling to accept her interpretation; that is, that they in any way discouraged her need for justice and her willingness to risk.

When the one-spoken-to is our employer, our teacher, our parent, the risks are obvious, implicit in the power relations which pertain in our culture. It is not surprising that most of the stories of speaking up show the speaker in a role which casts her as having less power than the one-spoken-to. Even in those few cases where the one-spoken-to is a peer or a friend, there may be a perceived risk in terms of possible ridicule, physical danger, or loss of friendship. In this latter type of relation, risk is hedged by power of a different sort--ascribed by the one who speaks. Considering the power differential of the speaking up relation, we ask if speaking up would even occur, or would even be necessary, if there were no real or perceived power inequality.

Thus, while the phenomenology of speaking up shows it as an expression and confirmation of personal power, an "I am" and an "I can," a relational view of speaking up illuminates the risk of the action by casting it in terms of power. A feminist perspective, which is premised upon women's oppression, broadens the scope of the power relation to encompass the lived-experience of females as a group within a larger society.

Power Among Groups

The addition of a perspective which sees power as existing between groups has implications for feminist dilemmas regarding the relative importance of gender, race and ethnicity, and points to both the advantages and the limitations of a phenomenological approach to feminist research. Feminism assumes women's oppression, that is, the existence of a relation of permanent inequality (Miller, 1976) in which females occupy a subordinate position in relation to males. This constitutes a particular conception of power, one which focuses on the degree of freedom to do or act which tends to be enjoyed by particular groups in society, in this case, by females and by males.

Miller distinguishes between two types of power imbalance in relationships. The first is the temporary inequality of a custodial or helping relationship: child to parent, student to teacher, or client to therapist. These relations are "based in service to the lesser party," in that the role of the "superior" person is to help the "lesser" eventually achieve equality. Many of the speaking up stories occur within this type of power relation, where the person occupying the subordinate position of student, child, or employee challenges the authority of the dominant individual. Miller's second type of inequality is permanent, with no expectation of eventual equality. Status is determined at birth, according to race, nationality, sex, religion, class, or other criteria. Miller believes that, in our culture, females occupy a position of permanent inequality with respect to males. The implications of such a relation are evident in a few of the stories of speaking up: Indira speaks up to her husband and is thrown out of the house, and Sherryl confronts the personnel manager about the expectation that female staff will serve drinks at company functions. The stories of "wishing I had spoken up" show female/male inequality more clearly, as when Norma is deprived of the opportunity to share the moments following her baby's birth with her husband, when Amy's first husband makes all of the decisions about the couple's social activities, or when Margaret's brother-in-law makes unwelcome sexual advances to her.

Miller's analysis of power describes patterns of behavior that develop between members of subordinate and dominant groups. Of particular relevance to this study is her comment that members of subordinate groups must, for their own survival, avoid direct, open, self-initiated action.

> In our own society, a woman's direct action can result in a combination of economic hardship, social ostracism, and psychological isolation--and even the diagnosis of a personality disorder. (Miller, 1976, p. 10)

The subordinate group, Miller claims, resorts to acting and reacting in indirect ways that are intended to accommodate and please the dominant group. Thus we see a cultural dynamic which points to the inadvisability, even the danger, of speaking up for members of subordinate groups. Challenges to the authority of the dominant group tend to occur in ways that are veiled, and are therefore safer for both parties.

An analysis of power differentials between groups of individuals becomes exceedingly complex once it admits considerations both of temporary inequality, as in parent/child or teacher/student relations, and of permanent inequality, where relations are based in factors such as ethnicity, gender and class. This research includes many examples of speaking up in relationships of temporary inequality. It is also constructed in such a way as to highlight the possibility of a situation of permanent inequality based upon gender, since stories were collected only from women. Distinctions of ethnicity are undoubtedly present, since the women who spoke and wrote represent many different cultures, but they are obscured in the lumping together of the stories. Class distinctions become apparent only very indirectly, in that many of the women who contributed stories work in child care positions which are low-paying and have little status in our society. What is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional grid of power-defined relations becomes deceivingly simplistic in this research.

On the other hand, the phenomenological analysis of speaking up describes the essence of that experience, such that the risk of speaking up holds true across characteristics such as race, class and gender. A child, male or female, who speaks up to a teacher or a parent is taking a risk. An employee who speaks up to an employer is placing herself or himself in an uncertain position. The risk of speaking up increases with the number of characteristics which an individual possesses to which our culture ascribes a subordinate status. Although a woman occupies a subordinate status by virtue of being female, she may be privileged in terms of race and class. Speaking up may be less difficult for her than for a new-Canadian woman from a visible minority group who is struggling to learn English and the ways of the culture in order to maintain a minimum wage child care position. On the other hand, the less privileged woman may have less to lose through speaking up than others who enjoy a more advantaged position in society. The relative status which is ascribed to an individual is one factor in determining perceptions of speaking up, for a situation which might appear as risky to one individual may seem much less so to another.

Can women indeed be considered as a group, or are the bonds that unite individuals in terms of class and ethnicity so strong as to override gender identification? A phenomenological analysis defines the essence of an experience in a way that is beyond distinctions of class and ethnicity. Gender is admitted mainly through research which focuses upon biological difference, for example, in studies of birthing pain or sexuality. The fact that phenomenological description is directed at lived experience is one of the characteristics which makes it particularly suitable to feminist research. On the other hand, the effect of obscuring important areas of difference is of concern.

Implications of the Conceptualization of Power

Issues of power lie at the heart of feminism, so the way that we conceptualize power has important implications. The concept of power is used here in several different ways, each of which seems appropriate to a particular aspect of speaking up. I begin by basing my discussion around a very general definition of power as the ability to act or do. This description encapsulates the personal dimension of speaking up, where the action is an affirmation and expression of self, or "power-for", in which control is taken for one's own benefit as well, often, as for the benefit of another. The discussion of power in the relation of the speaker and the one-spoken-to draws upon a definition of power as "political or social ascendancy or control" and uses the term "power-over". Finally, a concept of power as existing between groups uses Miller's analysis of relations between dominant and subordinate groups, an approach which is compatible with a gender-based analysis. Each of these views of power, therefore, reflects a different aspect of the experience and act of speaking up. It becomes important to consider some of the possibilities and implications implicit in the way that we conceive of power because our conceptualization has implications, first of all, for the formulation of feminist research and, secondly, for considering the value of speaking up.

The Place of the Political

In Chapter Two, I mentioned the debate, within feminism, about the relative roles of the theoretical and the political. Much of this concern centres around essentialist positions which some feminists believe may be politically dangerous in their potential for justifying the differential treatment of women. When we cast speaking up in terms of power, a similar political concern surfaces in that, without distinctions based upon a power differential between groups, we are left with a view of gender difference which is open to interpretations that are damaging to women. A phenomenological approach to women's experience has immense value in its potential for illuminating the life-world without an overlay of theory, but, without the consideration of possible power differentials based upon gender, the interpretations which follow from such an analysis may be damaging to women. I would argue, therefore, for a phenomenological approach set against a cultural backdrop in such a way that the cultural perspective serves not as a description of what-is, but as a reminder of what-might-be.

The way that we envision power is critical to feminist research, because feminism assumes an unequal relation between females and males. Foucault's (1972) conceptualization of power challenges several of the assumptions that I have made about power in this chapter, for he emphasizes that power is not to be considered as a domination of one group or individual over others but rather as "employed and exercised through a net-like organization," with individuals as the vehicles of power, "always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising...power" (p. 98). Power is not necessarily negative, but simply exists, and change comes at the point where there is a dislocation, a rupture, or a growing dissatisfaction with what has been considered to be true. On one hand, Foucault's analysis points to opportunities for individuals to exercise power through confrontation and opposition, and speaking up may be seen as just such an exercise of power. On the other hand, the emphasis on individuals as the vehicles of power, and the accompanying rejection of relations of domination between groups, may tend, as Hartsock (1990) argues, to obscure relations of domination and to set the stage for arguments that blame the victims for their colonized state.

Foucault's analysis informs of opportunities for the exercise of power; that we can speak up. However, to conceive of speaking up apart from a consideration of gender-based power differentials opens the way for arguments that see women as deficient or needing different treatment. For example, the phenomenology of women's speaking up shows it, among other things, as an action which involves risk: the risk of exposing ourselves to the judgements of ourselves and others. The nature of phenomenology is such that we could suspect that men also experience risk as a part of speaking up. Discourse research tells us, however, that males and females tend to have different patterns of speech, and it seems reasonable to suppose that there may be gender-based differences with regard to speaking up. Suppose, then, that a researcher were to find that women speak up considerably less often than do males. What a phenomenological analysis would add to this finding is the understanding that speaking up has to do with risk, so we could conclude that, for some reason, women are less likely than men to take risks. This deduction lends itself to a number of speculatory interpretations, some citing women's natural predilection to a different way of acting or of seeing the world, others pointing to the weakness which prevents women from straying from what is safe and known. Each of these two types of interpretations has inherent danger for women. The first, as critics of essentialism have pointed out, may justify the differential treatment of women. The second casts women as less adequate, perhaps needing correction, in a male world. If, however, we add a societal perspective to the concept of risk which casts women in a position of lesser power in relation to men, we see where the risk of speaking up in a given situation is greater for women than for men, and that women are therefore less likely to speak up. We cannot say whether any of these kinds of interpretation are "right," but given the negative potential which exists in each of the first two views, a gender-based analysis of power is important if only as a deterrent to hasty and possibly damaging conclusions.

I have argued that we can derive a better understanding by juxtaposing the phenomenological analysis with a cultural-political perspective. As I mentioned earlier, women's cultural experience is implicit in their lived-experience, so that the explication of a specifically cultural perspective should serve to trace and highlight threads that already run through the lived-experience accounts. Lived-experience can thus provide a reference point for cultural theory as long as the separation between the two is always clear.

Phenomenology's concern with feminism has to do with the extent to which political agendas could obscure lived-experience. I believe, however, that explanation will inevitably occur when the issues involved are as controversial as they are in gender debate. Now that I understand more about the nature of speaking up, it seems to me that to discuss that action outside the context of a societal perspective provides may be misleading, if not hazardous. Given that, it is best to be clear about what is and is not interpretation and what the possibilities and implications of various interpretive perspectives are.

Issues of power are intertwined with feminist research concerns, but they also speak to the question which brought us into this chapter, that is, "Is speaking up a good thing?" Whether we view power as positive, negative or simply there; whether we consider power imbalances as existing between groups and see them as needing to be rectified; whether we are even willing to conceptualize relationships in terms of power: all have a bearing upon the judgements we might make as to the value of speaking up.

Considering the Value of Speaking Up

Working with the Oxford dictionary's definition of power as the ability to act, individually or/and as a group, speaking up is an action taken by an individual which is an exercise of power standing in opposition to remaining silent. I argued that it is important to recognize gender-based power differentials. Where dominant groups enjoy greater freedom of action than do subordinate groups, it seems logical that speaking up may be more of a risk for subordinate groups. What I have not included to this point, however, is a large area of debate that has to do with women's relation to power. There are issues here which cannot be overlooked, for they bring us back to the question which focuses this chapter, that is, whether or not speaking up is a good thing.

Speaking up is inalienably about power--of individuals, for individuals, over individuals. Because speaking up occurs within a cultural context which frames it as a particularly risky action for women, it becomes, for women, an act of protest which threatens the power inherent in societal structures and, thus, an exercise of power which has significance beyond the individual action. In asking whether speaking up is a good thing, we are asking about the relation of women, individually and collectively, to power.

There is controversy within feminist thought about what women's relationship to power is and should be. Power is often identified with patriarchal structures, and there is a consequent tendency among some feminists to avoid associations with it. Certain feminist analyses seem to place women outside of traditional hierarchial power structures. For example, Gilligan's early (1982) theory sees women as growing within an ethic of care, where attachment and cooperation are valued, and males as developing in an ethic of justice, where independence and autonomy are the primary tasks. While acts of exercising power are significant in the achievement of independence and autonomy, they seem insignificant, if not contradictory, in relation to female developmental goals. Janeway's (1980) analysis reconceptualizes issues of power from the perspective of the powerless, particularly women. She argues that women, by virtue of their experience as members of a weaker group, can reshape patterns of power in positive ways. Such arguments reflect the radical feminist view that society needs to be totally restructured in a way that will accommodate female reality. However, such arguments do not address the issue of effecting such a change, for if women remove themselves from the established power structures of society, what is there to ensure that their absence will even be noticed, let alone that they will be able to bring about change?

The question as to whether change can be best effected from inside or outside of cultural structures is directly relevant in considering the relative value of speaking up and speaking-with. Speaking up, as an exercise of power over another, is an action that seems to fit within the traditional structure of power. As such, it is seen as women challenging the position which they occupy in the hierarchy, rather than contesting the validity of the hierarchy itself. Speaking-with, on the other hand, is consistent with a valuing of cooperation and responsibility for others, a perspective which exists more easily outside of a hierarchial power structure. There is yet another consideration, however, and this is that the emotion that accompanies speaking up may undermine women's credibility by facilitating cultural stereotyping, while speaking-with may combine culturally-accepted "male" and "female" ways of being. Concerns aired without debilitating emotion are consistent with expectations for male behavior. At the same time, the individuality of the other is recognized, a characteristic which some perspectives see as more important to females.

It would seem that speaking-with may offer a way of speaking where one could deal with difficult issues and still maintain a positive relationship with the one-spoken-to. A necessary condition for speaking-with, however, is that each party will listen to the other. If the one-spoken-to is functioning within a hierarchial, individualistic mode, will that individual, or that individual as a part of a larger institution, be able to hear the concerns of the other? Our cultural structures are presently such that to speak up is, in some situations, the only way to ensure that one is heard. But maybe, with practice, we could all learn to speak-with.

I raised questions earlier in the chapter about how to judge goodness, and found that the standard which women tend to suggest, and one which is reflected in the stories of speaking up, is whether there is a feeling of goodness about the action; whether it feels right. To judge rightness by whether or not something feels good may seem frivolous or hedonistic, but it can also be seen as a recognition of the importance of body and feeling. French (1985) sees a shift from a valuing of power to a valuing of pleasure as a feminist goal, and the recognition of body and feeling as part of an essential process of re-integration. Feminism, she writes,

> Condemns the pursuit of power, stratification and the repudiation of body and will that patriarchy instills in the public world, offering instead an ideal of felicity and human integration at every level--self with other (intimacy), self with others (community), and the private self, in body and mind, emotion and thought, sensation and vision. Because the highest value of feminism is pleasure, not power, feminists, male and female, perform a service by living their own lives with an eye to integration, fullness of experience and pleasure. (p. 187)

Speaking up usually involves feelings of rightness, yet there was also some discomfort, particularly around the relationship with the one-spoken-to. If we frame this information in terms of power, we see that the exercise of power, which the act represents, is positive for the women who speak. There is little question, either, that to exert power in the interests of another, as many women did in their speaking up, is considered to be a good thing. What is problematic is the power-over which is implicit in the relation with the one-spoken-to. As a mode of relation with another, power-over is not particularly desirable. If, however, we add a cultural perspective in which speaking up is an attempt to exercise power from a subordinate position, and if we believe that equality is good, the action is justified.

Regardless of our beliefs about the best position for women to take in relation to power, we cannot overlook the positive feelings which women experience, as individuals, in their claiming of power. Positiveness exists, in large measure, as a release from the discomfort of wanting to speak but remaining silent. If this is so, speaking up carries significance for us in relation to educational practice.

CHAPTER NINE

What Can Speaking Up Tell Us About Women's Education?

"For a long time I wouldn't say anything, but now I'm starting to speak up." It is not Ella's words that are striking, but the obvious pride and satisfaction with which she speaks. There is a sense of rightness here, as in other stories of speaking up, that must not be lost in theoretical questioning and debate. To me as a teacher of Early Childhood teachers, Ella's announcement is a firm reminder not to overlook the possibilities of speaking up for affirming self and indicating growth.

But how can I go about drawing educational implications from what we know about speaking up? Certainly the task would be easier if I could say, unqualifiedly, that, "Yes, speaking up is a good thing and everyone should learn to do it." As I have shown, however, speaking up is far from a simple action, and its value can be judged differently depending on the perspective which is taken.

I am fortunate in that, throughout the time that I have been involved with this research, I have been teaching Understanding Self-Esteem courses to women enroled in an Early Childhood Development program. It is a course geared toward self-awareness and understanding, so it has been appropriate and useful to introduce my questions and explorations. The women in the classes were supportive and genuinely interested--their journal entries and discussions have been very useful in helping me to better understand the relationship between speaking up and the educational experience. Much of my learning, however, comes not from discussions of speaking up but from statements that these and other women make about their life experiences and their participation in class. These comments have both set the stage for considering speaking up and have suggested the larger context within which the act may fit.

It is fascinating to note, for example, the comments students make about an assignment where they are to talk about themselves to the rest of the class:

> As I prepared my presentation, some of the thoughts I had were, "What will people say about me?" "Will they make fun of me?" Now that my presentation is over, I think, "I knew I could do it." (Nadia, journal)
>
> At first I felt really nervous--hands shaking, voice cracking, the whole bit, but once I got going the nervousness went away. I felt good that I actually did it without messing up.
> (Cara, journal)
>
> As I got ready to do my presentation tonight, I was nervous and a bit shaky. To me this was a risk for it's difficult for me to do things in a big crowd. But I found having done so I feel great for I did it. (Bernadette, journal)

In some ways, the comments are reminiscent of the stories of speaking up, for they clearly illuminate the risk of speech and the satisfaction that it brings. The difference between this kind of speech and speaking up lies mainly in the reason for speech and, associated with this, the kind of emotion that accompanies the action. Anger propels our speaking up, but it is mainly nervousness and doubt which accompany our desire to meet course requirements by doing a presentation to the class. The risk of making ourselves visible through words and action, of exposing ourselves to the judgement of others, is inherent in both acts of speech, however, and it seems that the possibilities for affirming oneself are also present: "Now I know why kids like show and tell," Connie exclaims. "It felt really good to talk and have everyone listening!"

It may be a risk to speak up and a risk to do a class presentation, but might it not also be a risk just to speak to another? Even under the most benign circumstances, to speak to someone else is still to cast out words which represent us, words which, as Barthes (1984) reminds us, cannot be recalled. And, at least if we are listened to, our speech might also have possibilities for confirming our existence and our value.

In exploring speaking up, I believe that I have also learned something about the nature of speech itself; that it is a risk, and that it has the potential to help us to know and express who we are and what we can do. A cultural perspective tells why it might be particularly important for female students to have an opportunity to find an "I am" and an "I can" as a part of, or basis for, their educational experiences.

The Cultural Context of Women's Educational Experience

A cultural perspective suggests that female students are receiving their education in settings where they have good reason to feel out-of-place or less than adequate. Spender (1981) argues that we have inherited our current model of education largely from the 19th century, and that this model was considered at the time to be highly inappropriate for women: "their brains would burst, their uteri atrophy, they would become unsuitable for motherhood if they were to receive what was considered 'a good education' for a man" (p. 156). Current gender-related research in education states that females may still have reason to feel like outsiders within the educational system in that they tend to receive less attention from teachers (Clarricoates, 1987; Brophy and Good, 1974; Shakeshaft, 1986), to be encouraged to perform stereotypically "feminine" tasks such as cleaning up and handing out workbooks (Barrett, 1987; Kelly, 1987), to be ridiculed or devalued (Lees, 1987; Kelly, 1987; Clarricoates, 1987; Barrett, 1987), and to be exposed to curriculum materials that show women mainly in peripheral or "silly" ways (Kelly, 1987). There is some suggestion that the competitive structure of the educational system is stimulating to males, but is experienced by females as less motivating and even adversive (Eccles, 1987). Perhaps it is not surprising that, even though they start school with a slight academic advantage (Sadker and Sadker, 1985), girls seem to have less confidence than boys in their abilities (Licht and Dweck, 1983) and tend to choose activities that involve fewer risks (Sprafkin, Dernier & Conner, 1983, in Tittle, 1986). The enculteration of females inside and outside of the schools explains such behaviors, and they are very consistent with an environment in which girls begin to doubt their acceptability and competence.

The exclusion of women in educational settings is reflected, as well, in culturally-based views of knowledge and women. As Levin writes,

> According to the paradigm imposed by our patriarchal tradition, 'knowledge' must be disinterested and dispassionate, a product of value-free enquiry. The patriarchal pursuit of 'knowledge' requires the pure objectivity of a disengaged, unmoved observer. The patriarchal ideal of "knowledge" excludes or overcomes its relationship to our sensibility. (1988, p. 287)

The educational context is traditionally one where rationality is valued: there is little allowance for "weaknesses of the flesh." Culturally prescribed dualisms associate women with body rather than mind and with passion rather than reason, thus automatically distancing females from the ideal of knowledge. It is but a short step from these cultural prescriptions to the experience which Crystal describes in her journal,

> In Grade 9 we had a teacher who spent a lot of time explaining math problems to boys, however, when a girl confronted him with a math question he replied, "Don't bother, girls cannot do math. You'll get through school, get married, stay home with a bunch of kids anyways." All of us girls resented this and many of us felt defeated before we even began math problems.
>
> (Crystal, journal)

Opportunities for speech and, more specifically, for speech that is listened to and valued, provide a way of restoring the "I am" and the "I can" to women's educational experiences. Recent research (Belenky et. al., 1986) suggests that, at least for women, the expression of self and knowing through speech is at the heart of the educational enterprise. When we are speaking we are taking an active stance: becoming visible, assuming control, and trying to bring about change. It is an orientation which is reflected in an epistemology where women see themselves as constructors of knowledge and where, in Rich's (1977) words, they "claim" rather than "receive" an education.

> The first thing I want to say to you who are students is that you cannot afford to think of being here to receive an education; you do much better to think of being here to claim one. One of the dictionary definitions of the verb "to claim" is: to take as the rightful owner; to assert in the face of a possible contradiction. "To receive" is to come into possession of; to act as a receptacle or container for; to accept as authoritarian or true. [illegible] difference is that of between acting and being acted-upon, and for women it can literally mean the difference between life and death.
>
> (Convocation address at Douglass College, 1977)

To exercise or "claim" power through speech stands in opposition to the passivity of silence, or of speaking to please someone else. The epistemological categories that are outlined in the work of Belenky et al. (1986) could be seen as representing an increasing claim by the individual woman, as she proceeds through the levels, to the process of constructing knowledge. In the first level identified, women which Belenky et al. describe as "silent" see themselves as mindless, powerless and voiceless, relying on external authority for direction. The second level is one in which women view knowledge as coming from authorities, and themselves as receivers and reproducers of that knowledge. In a very significant shift, women at the next level consider truth and knowledge as residing within themselves, and as private, personal, and intuitive. The fourth level, which the researchers describe as one of procedural knowing, is in some ways related to received knowing in that women are again regarding knowing as outside of themselves. This position, however, is more active in that women are learning to apply objective procedures to obtain and communicate knowledge. In the final category of constructed knowledge, women see themselves as constructors of knowledge, view knowledge as contextual, and value both subjective and objective knowledge. The integration of self, voice, and knowing in this research places self-expression at the heart of the educative enterprise by highlighting the activity of the learner in the construction of knowledge.

For women who have come to feel that they do not fully belong in educational institutions, or that they are unlikely to be successful in them, claiming an education may appear impossible, if not unthinkable. But there are ways to support women's move toward ownership of the classroom and of their learning, and the lessons of speaking up suggest them to us.

Lessons from Speaking Up

I have identified the value of speaking up for affirming our existence and expressing our capabilities, and have suggested that the expression of self is a vital part of women's learning activity. Is there something we can learn from the nature of speaking up, then, that could help us to facilitate the "I am" and the "I can" as a part of women's educational experience? Certainly, the exploration of speaking up has illuminated the risks of such speech, and it is important to understand these risks in the context of classroom experience.

Speech in the classroom, like speaking up, involves considerable risk. When we speak as students, we expose ourselves to others and to their judgements just as we do when we speak up. When we speak to the teacher, we do so as the "lesser" individual in a relationship of unequal power, in the same way that we tend to speak up from a subordinate power position. Although classroom speech is not necessarily confrontational in nature nor spurred, like speaking up, by anger or related emotions, the common element of risk provides possibilities for looking at classroom experience and practice.

The Relation of Body and Will

Speaking up occurs precisely because the body pushes us into action. We can no longer contain our emotion, and we must speak. The words burst forth, often beyond our awareness and control. The distinctiveness of speaking up as an act of speech revolves around this component of high emotion: anger, frustration, indignation. Without the emotion, the risk of speaking up presents an insurmountable barrier, keeping us in silence.

In a different act of speaking, the speaking of the classroom presentation, emotion is also strong, but it is emotion of a different sort, of anxiety or nervousness. Unlike anger, nervousness does not burst forth. Rather, like the associated emotions of timidity and fear, it tends to hold back. The words that come forward out of nervousness emerge with difficulty; it comes as no surprise that the word anxious is derived from the Latin angere, to compress or choke (Weekley, 1967). "When I started to talk, my voice came out squeaky," Ruth writes. "I felt so silly." In the balance of will and emotion, nervousness tends not to force the determination to speak, but instead, the will to speak needs to be strong enough to overcome the nervousness, to push the words out. In this classroom situation, we speak despite, rather than because of, emotion.

The will to speak in the classroom originates in a determination to meet course requirements, as when the instructor dictates that each student must speak in front of the class. Hopefully, it also often derives from the student's engagement with learning. With speaking up, the difficulty of the action could contribute to the satisfaction the speaker obtains from it, and the impetus for speaking might also come from a desire to challenge oneself.

If the act of speech occurs out of a combination of will and emotion that is strong enough to overcome the risk of speaking, what does this tell us about bringing a student from silence to speech? One way to accomplish this goal would be to lessen the risk, so that speech does not require such a push of emotion or such a high degree of determination. We should create an environment for risk-taking, where risk-taking is seen as having possibilities for growth and learning and where each individual is viewed as unique. If we are to do this, however, it seems important that we first identify the risks that exist for students: those inherent in speech itself, as well as the risks which derive from the classroom relation, where the institutional mandate and the teaching role prescribe certain types of speech and limit or prohibit others.

The Risks of the Speech Act

The risks of speaking, as of speaking up, have to do with the visibility and irrevocability of the action. When we speak we are exposed, for others turn to look at us, and they hear the words which come out of our mouths. Our physical appearance and the words we say represent us, and provoke others' judgements and, through them, our own. When we speak up, our high level of emotion makes it difficult for us to control what we hear and see, so we are even more vulnerable than we might be in another act of speech. Indeed, perhaps this is why this research elicited so few stories of speaking up in classroom situations. As we have seen in student's comments regarding their class presentations, however, this does not mean that other speech comes easily.

If the risk of speaking in class has to do with exposure and judgement, what are some of the implications for decreasing risk to the point that students are more likely to speak? The number of possibilities may be limited only by our own creativity, but one conclusion that I have come to upon talking with students and reading their journals is that the relationship with other students is vitally important.

"When I came into the classroom I felt quite intimidated," Maria writes. "Other people were laughing and talking but I didn't know anyone. After we did the drawing exercise and I got to know the people in my group I felt a lot more relaxed." Then she adds, "I really surprised myself when I stood up and introduced the other women in my group." Maria's speech comes, it seems, with her increased comfort, and the comfort derives from being acquainted with a small group of her classmates.

I ask my students what conditions they require in order to learn effectively and feel safe in our classroom. "We need to know that other people will listen to us and respect our opinions," they respond. "We need to know that we won't be laughed at or put down." "We need to be relaxed and non-judgemental." "We need to get to everyone." An act of speech may not be so risky when it occurs in the context of much other speech. A person with whom we have shared the events of the day will be a more tolerant judge if we make a statement that is less than profound. The person who has listened attentively as we told of our difficulties with a teenaged son will not be as "other," will not hold the same evaluative power as the one who is just a face in a classroom of students.

There are many ways to decrease the risk of speaking in the classroom. Teachers have long used seating arrangements as a way of supporting or discouraging classroom talk; clusters of students around small tables are much more likely to speak than are students arranged in rows facing forward. My students emphasize that they feel much less exposed when they can make class presentations from their own seats, and sitting down, rather than standing in front of the class. Journaling can also provide a step toward speaking up, as students are able to "speak in writing." During a summer class in which students engaged in daily journaling which they shared with their classmates, one student remarked to me that it was, "the first time I've ever felt like my classmates really got to know me."

As teachers, we tend to be aware of, and open to, the possibilities for our student's speaking. Through careful observation and experience, we learn to judge more exactly what each student needs in order to speak. Some students can stand before a class to speak and feel just enough nervousness that the action is a worthwhile risk, while others will need more support in order to speak at all. We also learn to tell what speaking in class means to each individual. We know the students for whom one comment in class is a significant accomplishment, and the others who, from speaking for our attention, move to speaking from their engagement with learning.

I believe that an awareness of risk as a characteristic of speech can be very useful in helping us to arrive at classroom conditions which help students, individually and as a group, to speak. The discussion and examples that I have used here just scratch the surface in terms of the possibilities that can derive from this perspective. A consideration of risk is incomplete, however, without the perspective that we derive from looking at aspects of power which frame the educational experience.

Power, Knowledge and Speech

Given the interactive nature of self and environment, women's learning needs are conceptualized as deriving from their personal qualities, the interactions which comprise their life experience and, finally, from the cultural-political perspective which encompasses these. The cultural-political view has to do both with the beliefs that define our culture and the institutions through which those beliefs are implemented, so it is at this level that we see how our view of knowledge and our beliefs about education shape our educational system and, therefore, our experience in it. To take such a perspective leads us easily into issues of power, for we must consider both the power differentials that exist between individuals and groups in educational situations and, intrinsically related to this, the power that resides in our view of knowledge.

Power relations in the classroom.

I have borrowed from Miller (1976) in describing the relationship between the teacher and student as one of a temporary inequality, defined and confined by institutional structures, in which the teacher's task is to move the student to a position of equal status. Implicit in the nature of the student/teacher relationship, then, are questions about the best way to fulfil its mandate; that is, to help the student to become equal.

Miller believes that, as a society, we have not been very effective in finding ways to deal with the central task of temporarily unequal relationships which is to move individuals from unequal to equal status.

> We agonize about how much power the lesser party shall have. How much can the lesser person express or act on her or his perceptions when these definitely differ from those of the superior? Above all, there is great difficulty in maintaining the conception of the lesser person *as a person of as much intrinsic worth as the superior*. (p. 5)

The ways in which the teacher resolves and deals with these kinds of issues determine, to a great extent, the degree of risk that exists in students' self-expression. Does the "lesser" person become genuinely involved in growth and learning, or does she, in Miller's words, "learn how to be a good 'lesser'?" (p. 5)

The temporary inequality which females experience by virtue of their student status is, in Miller's conception, overlaid by the institutionalized and permanent inequality which women experience by virtue of their gender. Ethnicity, class, and other characteristics contribute still other layers to the power relation.

In order to survive, Miller notes, subordinate groups adopt various protective strategies. Because it is dangerous for them to act directly, in their own interests, members of the subordinate group find disguised and indirect ways of acting and reacting. They become highly attuned to the needs and desires of the dominant group, and are able to predict their reactions. In fact, Miller comments, they come to know more about the dominant group than they do about themselves, inasmuch as they have absorbed many of the cultural stereotypes held by the dominant group into their own self-image. What this perspective suggests is that the issue of women's speech in educational settings has to do not so much with the act of speech itself, but with meaningful speech, speech that reflects real thoughts, feelings and beliefs rather than those that the individual perceives that the teacher might wish to hear.

I have argued in the previous chapter that to not recognize the possibility and implications of power differentials between groups of individuals is dangerous to the groups which occupy subordinate positions. This would be particularly true for relations in permanent inequality, as temporarily unequal relations are more easily justified. Where gender-related research on educational behaviors and performance indicates significant differences between females and males, to disregard power differences between the two groups opens the way for explanations of essential difference or deficiency, both of which are harmful to females.

To consider the power that is inherent in our definition of knowledge is, on the surface, quite different from speaking of power differentials between groups. Still, as I have noted earlier, our cultural definitions of knowledge combine with gender-related assumptions to produce a perspective which excludes females from the realm of academia. In considering the risks for women's self-expression, I will look at some ways that our view of knowledge is manifest in educational practice and the effect that such practice has upon women's willingness to speak in the classroom.

Speech and knowing.

When women speak and write about their educational experience, it becomes apparent that our educational system tends to function according to a view of knowledge which limits the extent to which women can become engaged with their knowing. When knowledge is seen as objective, existing outside of ourselves, it becomes necessary to exclude the personal from academia. There are only certain topics, therefore, about which we can speak, and the rest must remain hidden. When knowledge is considered to be measurable, we tend to limit learning to that which can be measured. An institutional structure that is competitive and hierarchial combines with a view of knowledge as measurable to produce systems for evaluating learning that not only define, within a narrow range, what is important to learn, but restrict the act of learning in a way that may be not only unsatisfying but also alienating.

"I'm feeling much better today because my headache is gone." the journal begins. "I had a hard time keeping my mind on my work today because my husband is having his operation tomorrow," reads another. "I felt very tired this morning by the time I arrived in school. My son was up four or five times in the night." Tannen (1990) suggests that women are more comfortable with the kind of communication which she calls rapport-talk, that is, talk that is intended to establish connections and negotiate relationships. Whatever the reasons may be, these summer university students usually begin their journal entries with a statement about their personal state or their life concerns; the personal forms a frame of reference for the "academic" work which they go on to discuss.

Our cultural view of knowledge discourages the intrusion of the personal into an educational setting, requiring that we separate mind from matter, thought from feeling, the academic from the personal. Speaking up tells us, however, that the mind cannot be separated from the body, for each plays a part in our experience. The body pushes the mind to action, and shows us what we had not known. In attempting to disregard the body we not only aspire to the impossible, but we close off possible sources of knowledge. When we try to exclude passion from academia, we deprive ourselves of a speech which may, in fact, be the most profound expression of our selves and our condition.

If emotion is recognized as a bodily message from which we can learn, perhaps we will no longer treat anger or tears as a detriment to learning, an embarrassment or a weakness. The admission of the "whole self", mind and body, personal and public, to the learning experience also restores something of the integrity of each student's unique experience, for personal experience, unlike other information, cannot be dictated by others. To recognize emotion as a departure point in learning also has the effect of legitimating qualities which our culture views as feminine: passion, intuition, and a willingness to let go of control. This acceptance would make a place for females in educational institutions, and would help to give both males and females culturally-sanctioned access to a full range of human characteristics.

As teachers, we distance ourselves from students when we admit only a part of their life experience, a part of their being, to the educational setting. Such distancing is encouraged, almost forced, by the requirement that we summarize their learning as a letter grade at the end of the course. I am particularly aware of this as I outline the course grading criteria to my students on the first day of class. They are anxious and I try to reassure them but, at the same time, I am aware that at some point I must withdraw from them, see them "objectively" and assign a grade. The need to assign grades reflects and encourages both our distancing from our students and the exclusion of large parts of their lives and being from our relationship with them. Instructors state that grading is easier, "in large classes where you don't get to know the students," or "where the grading criteria are very clear and you don't look at anything else." The external standard is easier to apply when one does not see the individuality of the student.

Grading requirements not only objectify students, but they are a part of a system which builds barriers between classmates. When the institution is structured so that students are in competition with one another for grades, some kinds of interactions are severely restricted. As a young female university student told me recently, "I'd like to help her, but there are only so many 9's given out, and if I help her, she might get the one I should have." Marilyn, a summer student, writes passionately and extensively about a session in which the class is to make decisions about evaluation. She notes, among other things, that

> The word competition arose several times and people were demonstrating signs of frustration and stress; voices were raised, people flapped their hands, and I heard a couple of people mention that they had headaches. ...It really destroyed the wonderful supportive atmosphere which had been so magically created in the last three weeks.
> (Marilyn, journal)

A system of grading which has its basis in a competitive ethic tends both to isolate students in their learning endeavors and pit them against one another. Where close and positive relationships with classmates tend to support women's speech in the classroom, a competitive grading system stands in the way of speech. The relationship of speech to knowing is underlined by the realization that such a system of evaluation is also incompatible with the recognition of individual claims with respect to learning needs.

Belenky et al. (1986) emphasize the interrelatedness of knowing, voice, and self. Marilyn's journal reflects this connection, as we see in the segment below where her experiences with evaluation take her to a reassessment of her own learning process and motivation:

> It was interesting how the projects' value shifted
>
> from enthusiasm for the task to the importance of "the mark". ...In a way, I personally feel betrayed. The course to some extent invites us to play. It is very open-ended and emphasizes self-growth and teaching our students as emerging individuals. ...I guess today left me with some questions: Do I really believe in play and the emerging curriculum? What was my original purpose for taking this course? Do I feel I've personally grown and benefited from this course?
> (Marilyn, journal)

Going on to answer her questions, Marilyn notes that "I've started to enjoy the process and have become as interested in the process as I am in the end result. Certain skills have improved....My general information level has increased as well." She concludes,

> I feel I've grown in the course in terms of positive self-image. I am able to speak up and push an idea I believe in even when I know I will not be popular...Thus I have come to the conclusion that for me personally the mark should not be important. My experiencing the process has been enough. (Marilyn, journal)

Marilyn's reflections are shared with her classmates, and the border of approving comments around the edge of the journal pages confirms that she also speaks for many of them. The process which has encouraged her to identify and explore her own learning needs is, as she sees it, directly opposed to the product-orientation of a final grade, and when it becomes evident that the course must include both aspects, she seriously re-evaluates her response to the course and its value to her. Increasingly, Marilyn uses her personal experience as a benchmark in her assessment, even before she reaches a final conclusion which represents an affirmation of the priority of her own experience over external judgements.

Competitive grading practices separate students from their own knowing. The objectification that is necessary in order to reduce experience to a letter or a number stands in the way of our listening to what students know and what they wish to know. Even more importantly, the external definition of what is known and what is important to know has the potential, as we see in Marilyn's discussion, to separate knowing from individual experience. Education becomes an experience of being done-to, rather than of doing.

From a cultural perspective, then, the risk of speaking lies somewhere within a complex web of power relations which finds female students in a subordinate position by virtue both of their gender and their student status. Research and theory suggest that females do, in fact, have a different educational experience from that of men, and there has been work, notably by Belenky et al. (1986), to determine what, in fact, women's relation to knowing is and could be. The Belenky et al. work also ties voice to knowing in a way which emphasizes the importance of speech as a claiming of power. Some of the risks of speaking in the classroom, or rather, of speaking in the classroom in a way that is a real expression of self and knowing, derive from a view of learning that has the effect of limiting what can and should be said. Learning then becomes a passive activity rather than an active engagement with the world.

I have proposed that what speaking up has in common with speech in the classroom is, first of all, its potential for affirming the value and abilities of the individual who speaks and, secondly, the risk which the action involves. The exploration of speaking up shows that the two characteristics may be related in that the risk of speaking up enhances the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment women experience when they speak up. The potential of speech for confirming one's worth and abilities is particularly important given a cultural milieu where women feel out-of-place or inadequate in educational settings, since self-expression seems to be closely related to women's sense of self and sense of competence as knowers. It is important, then, that we create an educational environment where women can express themselves through speech to the extent that speech has significance in their learning. What is significant will vary for individuals. For the student who has never spoken voluntarily in class, any comment might be a step forward; for the person whose speech has been geared toward pleasing and impressing, growth might be found in honest speech that reflects a deeper engagement with learning.

Deciding how to facilitate women's speech is not a straight-forward matter, given that body and will seem to work together to overcome the risk of speech but that risk may also contribute to the value of the action. The level of risk that is optimal for growth probably varies with situations and with individuals, so that teachers who wish to encourage their students to speak will need to be sensitive to the meaning that speech has for each student as well as to the conditions that can work to reduce risk.

I have explored the risks that are inherent in such speech in the belief that if we, as teachers, can find ways to diminish risk, we can facilitate meaningful involvement. This approach has rather negative overtones, however, in its focus on difficulty. Perhaps it is important to shift the perspective slightly in order to consider what the "I am" and the "I can" that are inherent in speech might tell us about achieving that goal.

Enhancing the "I Am" and the "I Can" in the Classroom

A focus upon facilitating speech in the classroom derives from the possibilities of that action for expressing self and affirming one's capabilities. I have explored some of the risks in classroom speech in the belief that an awareness of aspects of risk can help teachers to provide for an environment in which students will speak. What is not clearly reflected thus far in the discussion is that the "I am" and the "I can" that are inherent in speaking up seem to be vital components in a willingness to speak again; that the act seems to be both an affirmation of self and of possibilities for self. Perhaps, then, a woman who feels she is worth speaking for, and who sees herself as someone who is able to speak, would be more likely to take that action. The classroom implications of this are certainly that we need to provide an environment for successful speech but, also, that we look for other ways to strengthen the sense of self as worthwhile and capable. The risks of classroom speech can be reframed to provide a starting point for this.

The risks that stand in the way of classroom speech can tell us about ways to enhance the sense of self as important and capable. If it is a risk to speak in an environment where only certain types of knowledge can be admitted, and in certain ways, then the freedom to explore according to our own learning needs and to determine our own product, along with the encouragement to meld personal and public, body and mind, may be important as ways of strengthening a sense of personal efficacy. More specifically, then, classroom experiences might be directed toward a recognition of the "I am" that encompasses the physical self, so that students will come to recognize and respect what their bodies say to them. Students can be encouraged to consider their lived-experience as an important resource in their learning. They can be given the opportunity to determine and explore their individual learning needs, which implies that we must find ways of evaluating student progress that accommodate this type of exploration. All of these activities would need to take place within an environment that values exploration and risk-taking as a means to learning and development.

If it is true that women sometimes feel excluded or inadequate in relation to their educational experiences, perhaps it is particularly important that they learn to examine and question the dominant discourse which defines that experience. An awareness of other ways of seeing helps to shift the focus from deficiency to difference.

I have mentioned earlier in the chapter ways that we, as teachers, tend to help students feel more comfortable with speaking in the classroom. One of the most significant considerations had to do with the relation with classmates, which recognizes the importance of structuring class activities to include opportunities for getting to know, and working with, others. As the discussion of risk implies, methods of evaluation become a consideration in providing a cooperative learning environment, for students who are competing may be reluctant to help one another.

The student-teacher relation.

We cannot deny the importance of the student-teacher relation in encouraging speech: even the most silent student will speak when she senses that the teacher values her uniqueness and genuinely cares about what she has to say. Speaking-with, where each of the partners is recognized in their individuality, speaks and is listened to, is significant for the student-teacher relation. If we draw, though, from Miller's definition of the student-teacher relation as one of temporary inequality, where it is the responsibility of the teacher to help bring the student into a position of equality, we see that there are limits to reciprocity. Perhaps the rhythm of student/teacher speech is one in which the teacher's voice is heard most strongly through the environment that she creates. In the day to day affairs of the classroom, however, that voice becomes an attentive and supportive undertone to student's speech.

Educational experiences which enhance the "I am" and the "I can" will hopefully produce benefits which extend beyond the classroom. That women will take a willingness to speak, a sense of themselves as capable and worthwhile, into their work and personal lives seems particularly important in the context of Early Childhood Education.

Helping Early Childhood Teachers Speak

In the first chapter, I mentioned that issues around speaking up tend to be particularly relevant to women in Early Childhood Education. A cultural view which situates knowing in a system of dualisms illuminates the situation which Early Childhood teachers face and the setting for their speech.

The two groups of educators that I teach, the college students who graduate to work in primarily non-school settings such as day care and the university students who will work in school settings, face quite different, but equally compelling, reasons for speaking up. In their university program, Early Childhood Education students learn a way of being with children in educational settings that challenges the dominant discourse with respect to the definition of knowledge. Because of this, they often need to speak, if not to speak up, in defense of their teaching philosophy and practice. In a culture which separates academic from personal and mind from body, Early Childhood theory emphasizes the importance of the "whole" child. Where the nature of learning is determined by the standards which students are expected to meet, Early Childhood teachers are taught to base curriculum upon individual development. Not only do newly-graduated Early Childhood Education teachers have to deal with the unfamiliar experience of being fully responsible for a group of children, but they are often forced to defend their practice, and they are encouraged to play an advocacy role with respect to the kind of experiences which they believe the children should have. It is, as Everett-Turner suggests in her 1984 study, a heavy expectation to place upon new teachers.

College students who graduate from an Early Childhood Development program to work in day care and other preschool settings face a somewhat different set of expectations, but have the same need to speak and speak up. Where students graduating to teach in the school system struggle with the definitions of academia, child care professionals are caught to a greater extent by the prescriptions of the female role, that is, by the belief that women inherently know how to care for children and hence do not require training, the belief that women do not require a viable salary because they will be supported by husbands, and by a general devaluing of the "women's work" that they do. They, too, need to speak up, but because they need monetary and other recognition for their work with children.

Are there ways that we, as teacher educators, can help to equip these students to speak to the nature and the value of the work that they do? Individuals who feel worthwhile and capable as students of Early Childhood Education will carry that philosophy into their work life and into the community with considerable conviction. Once they are there, however, they will undoubtedly confront at least traces of a dominant discourse that runs counter to their beliefs and practice. One of the ways to prepare them to deal with this is to model in our teaching, as closely as possible, the kind of learning experience which they will be providing for their students. Then when they speak in defence of their teaching practice, they are able to do so from their own direct experience. We should also include in the program of studies ample opportunities for examining, not only alternative program models, but the world views which underlie them. It is important that students know they will encounter resistance, that they be able to identify the roots of opposing views, and that they be prepared to clearly articulate their own beliefs to themselves and to others. To offer courses which focus upon understanding and supporting self-esteem and which teach communication and relationship skills seems important from a number of perspectives. The courses can strengthen, in a direct way, students' sense of competence and value. Beyond this, the recognition of feelings and the willingness to act upon them will help, in appropriate circumstances, to replace speaking up with what may be more satisfying and productive mode, speaking-with. If relationships with others provide a support for speech, there are implications both for teaching interpersonal skills and for continuing involvement with a strong professional network.

The quality of women's learning is closely tied to the expression of self and knowing, such that speech becomes an important focus in planning for women's educational experiences. With sensitivity and understanding, we can come closer to providing the conditions which our students, individually and collectively, require for the meaningful speech which is part of a full participation in their learning. Hopefully, students who will be teachers will carry this deep involvement with learning into their own classrooms, and they will be able to speak and speak up about the importance of such experiences for others.

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